

GURU NANAK

THE APOSTLE
OF LOVE

M. S. Surma

S. Karnail Singh Jee.

GURU NANAK

By the Same Author

GURU GOBIND SINGH—THE NATIONAL HERO

Price Rs. 2.50

The author has extensively quoted from the writings of Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji, giving the original in Dev Nagri script with its translation in English. This makes the book quite interesting. The giving of quotations in Dev Nagri script gives access to a large number of Indian readers to the original writings of Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji and hence adds to the value of the book.

—*Weekay Weekly*, Bombay.

Sardar Surma's attempt needs commendations.

—*Spokesman*, New Delhi.

The author has given a vivid description of the life and teachings of Guru Gobind Singh, and has quoted extensively from the writings of the Guru. The book is worth distribution among Sikhs and non-Sikhs for the sake of Prachar.

—*Ranjeet Weekly*, Bombay.

In this small book, the life and teachings of Guru Gobind Singh have been nicely presented. I would request the Singh Sabhas to buy this book in lot and distribute to Sikhs and non-Sikhs for Prachar.

—General Secretary, U. P. Sikh Pratinidhi Board, Lucknow.

GURU TEG BAHADUR—THE KING OF MARTYRS

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Guru Nanak

The Apostle of Love

By
M. S. SURMA

LUCKNOW
United Sikh Mission

51, GWYNNE ROAD

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M. S. Surma, Lucknow.

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Contents

	<i>Pages</i>
PREFACE	.. vi
CHAPTER I—INTRODUCTION—	
A brief account of the times and people before the birth of Guru Nanak	.. 1
CHAPTER II—EARLY LIFE AND THE CALL—	
A brief account of Guru Nanak's life from birth to the commencement of his travels..	8
CHAPTER III—THE TRAVELS—	
Travel, through different parts of India, Asia and other European countries. Guru's discourses with the philosophers and saints of other religions of the world..	.. 20
CHAPTER IV—THE LAST DAYS—	
Founding of the Republic of God Fearing People at Kartarpur; visit to Achal Batala and Multan; handing over of Guruship to Baba Lehna Ji; passing away from the world 54
CHAPTER V—RELIGION OF GURU NANAK—	
Guru Nanak's view about God, man's duty towards God, himself and society	.. 60

Preface

THE main difficulty a student of Sikh history faces is the paucity of reliable contemporary and near contemporary literature on the subject. This may be attributed broadly to the following reasons—

- (i) Indians, by nature, had never shown keenness to keep a detailed account of historical events ;
- (ii) During the period India was under Mohammadan rulers there had been a systematic and organised effort by the zealots of Islam to destroy any literature pertaining to early Indian history, culture or religion. This gained greater momentum during and after the reign of Jehangir, when the relations between the State and the Sikh Church were strained ;
- (iii) Rivalry and jealousy amongst the members of the families of Sikh Gurus, whose claims to the gaddi were disputed by the Gurus themselves. These disgruntled persons not only introduced spurious writings but distorted the facts given in the biographies which existed in a small number ; and
- (iv) Over-zeal on the part of some of the devotees who fabricated and narrated stories attributing supernatural powers and miracles to the Gurus—"miracles" against which the Sikh Gurus themselves spoke so vehemently. In their anxiety to present an elevated image of the Gurus, they even at times tried to equate the Gurus with God. The stories which they attributed to Gurus when read in conjunction with their writings and teachings would show that the Gurus at times contradicted themselves.

The earliest record, which may be considered reliable, relating some of the major events of the lives of the first six Gurus are found in the *Vars* written by Bhai Gurdas, an intellectual giant and poet philosopher, who flourished in the 17th century. The

accounts given by him, though very reliable, are very brief. They are, however, of a great help to re-construct the life of Guru Nanak. In addition we find some Janam Sakhis or biographies of the Sikh Gurus and the voluminous poetical works (in Hindi) of Bhai Santokh Singh Maha Kavi. Most of the material available in these Janam Sakhis and in the works of Bhai Santokh Singh does not appear to be reliable as it does not appeal to reasoning. Many times his poetic fancies seem to have taken Bhai Santokh Singh astray. But yet these Janam Sakhis and Bhai Santokh Singh's work give us valuable clues to many of the important events of the lives of Sikh Gurus and, therefore, cannot be totally discarded.

Fortunately we have with us original writing of our Gurus as embodied in Adi Granth. These writings have come to us without any change from the original text, and give us a clear idea of their teachings. They enable us at times to have the glimpses of some historical events as well. These writings can also help a keen student to accept or reject materials available to him for reference.

The first scientific effort ever made to write the history of Sikhs was made by J. D. Cunningham, a political officer and a scholar, in 1850 A. D. His work, to this day is probably the most exhaustive and analytical and serves as a reliable reference. While dealing with history, Cunningham also touches on religion of Sikhs though at a relatively lesser degree. Soon after, Dr. Trump a German scholar, made an attempt to translate the Granth Sahib, but his work contains mistakes and inaccuracies and as such none has taken any serious note of it. In the later half of 19th century, M. A. Macauliffe, an I. C. S. officer, took keen interest in the religious scripture of Sikhs and after eighteen years of serious study, brought out his monumental work entitled the *Sikh Religion* which runs into six volumes. Macauliffe was assisted by some of the top Sikh scholars and philosophers of his time.

During the present century a great deal of research in Sikh history and religion has been done by Indians as well as Europeans. As a result of this a sizable literature, in many languages, such as English, Hindi, Urdu and Punjabi is available now. Yet a great deal is still obscure. In the compilation of

this small book, I have made modern literature and the original writings of the first Guru, the basis.

In writing this book my aim is to produce a small and concise account of historical and religious personality of Guru Nanak. Every effort has, therefore, been made to give quotations from the writings of Guru Nanak at appropriate places. My other book, *Guru Gobind Singh—The National Hero*, published last year was appreciated by many Sikh organisations and individuals in Bombay and Uttar Pradesh and then obtained its copies in great number for free distribution for the sake of Prachar. I hope this labour of love of mine will receive their same appreciation.

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M. S. SURMA

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

फिर सदा तोहीद की उठी उधर पंजाब से
हिन्द को इक मर्द कामिल ने जगाया खाब से
(डॉ० इकबाल की कविता "गुरु नानक")

"Then from the Punjab a voice proclaimed the unity of God. A perfect man woke India from the slumbers of superstitions." —**Dr. Iqbal** in his poem "*Guru Nanak*."

ABOUT five thousand years ago when the Aryans from Central Asia drove the original inhabitants of the Northern India towards South and had complete sway over these parts, they settled down in the plains of the Punjab and reorganised themselves into different sections. Those who were old and learned, were given the duties of writing and teachings and were called Brahmins, the young who liked fighting, were given the duties of soldiery and were called Kshatriyas while the rest were given the duties to procure supplies and were known as Vaishyas. Those aboriginals who were captured as prisoners of war and had accepted the faith of Vedic religion were given menial duties and were called Shudras. "Till about 600 B. C., the genius of Hindu is said to be fully developed so that the mathematical and astronomical sciences were perfect and complete and the path of sun and moon were accurately determined. The Brahmins preached monotheism—the unity of God and immortality of soul about which even so many of the civilised nations of the world were ignorant."*

About this time the codes of Manu had taken effect and the four sects of Hindus were permanently compartmentized. The so-called titles became hereditary. The son of a Brahmin must be called a Brahmin and so on.

It became the starting point of the dogma of inequality amongst the Hindus. The structure of the Hindu Society was thus seriously disturbed. The codes of Manu recognise the doctrine of monotheism.

* J. D. Cunningham—*History of Sikhs*.

The onslaught of Buddhism and the influence of Jainism brought in its wake the corruption of spiritual structure of Hindu society. Monotheism gave way to polytheism and worship of images and stones began. Even though, with the eloquence of his genius, Jagatguru Shankaracharya in 900 A.D. was able to defeat the Buddhist and banish the religion of the Budha from India, yet he was unable to resist from his own followers the keeping of images and idols as the object of worship in the Hindu temples. The God-head was not to be worshipped direct but the other gods such as Shiva—the destroyer, Vishnu—the Protector, and many more were to be paid devotion. Shankaracharya created four centres and made Shiva the supreme deity to be worshipped. His disciple Ramanuj differed with him and about 1,000 A.D., he established another sect of Brahmins with Vishnu as the main deity. He considered Vishnu the God himself and thus devalued the Supreme Being.

The Vedic Hinduism which gradually became Brahminism, started decaying on social as well as spiritual plane. The complex of being superiors amongst the Brahmins isolated them from other sects of Hindus. The multiplicity of gods created rivalry amongst them† and the votaries of one god decried the votaries of the other god. The pious householders were considered inferior to the ascetics, who in fact were living on the mercy of householders and yet were keeping the householders under awe of curses. Similarly Kashatryas, because of the political power they enjoyed, started dictating the superiority of one deity over the other. The common man became confused, confounded and helpless. He did not know as to which god to worship and which leader—Brahmin or Kashatrya—to follow.

The impact of Islam and the bigotry of its rulers gave a crushing blow to the Hindu social and religious system. The inroads by the Muslims started in 726 A.D. by Mohammad Bin Qasim and by 1,350 A.D. almost the whole of India came under the influence of Islam. The old literature of Hindu philosophy was systematically destroyed, and the language and the social system of the Hindus underwent a gradual change. Hindu temples were destroyed and Mosques built at their sites and social and

† G. C. Narang—*Transformation of Sikhism*.

religious customs of the vanquished people were systematically curbed.

In this process the Muslims were also getting Indianised gradually. The converts to Islam from lower ranks of Hindus could not shed, so easily, the worship of their deities. Islam, therefore, had to modify itself so as to cater for this section which was growing day by day. Pirs and Sayyads became the counterparts of Brahmins. Moguls and Pathans became like Kashatryas. The superstitions started creeping into the religion of Mohammad and the followers of the Prophet started forgetting the unity of God and indulged in (a) hero worshipping, (b) considering the Sayyads, Immams and Pirs as agents of God, and (c) worshipping the graves of dead Pirs and martyrs. The Qazis (professional interpreters of the Muslim law) became the policy makers and the Muslim rulers the ruthless executors of those policies. The rulers, thus instead of studying the tenets of their religion and using their own common-sense in dealing with religious or even state subjects, became helplessly subordinated to the Qazis who could give the interpretation of Quranic law in a way most suited to their whims.

The innocent words of the Prophet that "he was ordained to promulgate a divine revelation and to promote the religion of God by sword and that a drop of blood shed in the cause of God was more useful than the fasting for two months," were interpreted to mean that a person who killed more number of non-muslims would be more exalted in the society of Islam and would hold more privileges in the Heaven. The liberal promises of beautiful nymph slaves, bliss and happiness in the next world and the immediate prospects of riches and wealth were enough to kindle the frenzy, arouse the martial spirit and influence the passions of desert people. The frenzied Gazis, therefore, endeavoured to surpass each other in killing innocent non-muslims—just for the glory of Islam and ensure for themselves an exalted place in heavens. The Gazis did not wait to enjoy the promised nymphs in heavens but indulged in the rape of innocent women of the vanquished people.† Thus, the religion of the Prophet which was to feed the starving souls by preaching the unity of God, His

† Mohammad Latif—*History of Punjab*.

supremacy over all and equality and fraternity of mankind, indulged in such barbarous actions that the very word Islam, in the eyes of non-muslims, became embodiment of cruelty, tyranny and persecution. People instead of respecting it, started hating it. The actions of the Qazis and Ghazis, instead of glorifying, unglo- rified their religion. "Thus customs jarred with customs" says Cunningham, "and opinions with opinions, and while the few always fell back with confidence upon their revelations—the Quran and Vedas—the public mind became agitated and found no sure resting peace with Brahmins and Mullas, with Mahadeva or Mohammad.... Learning had likewise declined and poetic fancies and family traditions were allowed to modify the ancient legends of Purans.... and to usurp the authority of Vedas." The Qazis, therefore, were much responsible for the degeneration of the religion of the Prophet, as the Brahmins were for degenerating the religion of Vedas.

Even during such a dark period as this, Nature was not altogether hostile to the people. In His benevolence, the God Almighty sent a number of great persons to give solace to the spiritually starved humanity. This period, therefore, is rightly known as Bhagti period in the Indian history. In the fourteenth century Ramanand, a follower of Ramanuj formed another sect with heroic Rama as the chief object of devotion and worship. He did not confine his sect to any particular class of people and declared that all human beings are equal in the eyes of God. During the same period Guru Gorakh Nath preached the science of Yoga and declared that by intense mental abstraction, one could attain God. He chose Shiva as the deity. In the beginning of the fifteenth century, Kabir a disciple of Ramanand appeared on the scene and in a very forceful language assailed (1) the privilege of studying religious scriptures by the so-called upper classes, (2) the idol worshipping, (3) the authority of Quran and Shastras; and (4) the multiplicity of gods. He laid particular emphasis on nothingness in life. He also talked of the superiority of Sadhus and ascetics. "He considered," writes Cunningham, "Rama and Vishnu as most perfect type of gods. Like his predecessors, he erringly gave shape and attributed forms to divinity."

Kabir was followed by a number of other great men like Chaitan and Vallabh who gave to the pious house-holders a fairly

superior position. Every one of these great men albeit added to the already big number of deities by declaring one or the other god as most appropriate for the object of devotion. They doubtless helped the people break the bondage of priestly class but introduced at the same time the spirit of nothingness of life which factor was chiefly responsible for destroying dynamism and dragged the people to virtual mental stagnation.

"They perfected," writes Cunningham, "forms of dissent rather than planted the germs of nation, and their sects remain to this day as they left them. It was reserved for Nanak to perceive the true principles of reform and to lay that broad foundation which enabled his successor Gobind to fire the minds of his countrymen with a new nationality, and to give a practical effect to the doctrine that the lowest is equal with the highest, in race as in creed, in political rights as in religious hopes."

Bhai Gurdas Ji who flourished in the seventeenth century has given a vivid description of the conditions prevailing at that time. He tells us as to how the people belonging to different religions were flying at each others' throat in the name of religion and how the corrupt officials of the administration and the so-called guardians of law, instead of giving justice and protection to the general public, were sipping their blood. About the religious intolerance Bhai Gurdas says :—

चार वरन चार मजहबां, जग विच हिन्दू मुसलमाणे ।
 खुदी बखीली तकबरी, खिचोतान करै न घिगारणें ।
 गंग बनारस हिन्दुआं, मक्का काबा मुसलमाणे ।
 मुन्नत मुसलमान दी, तिलक जजू हिन्दू लोभाणे ।
 राम रहीम कहाइदे, इक्क नाम दुइ राह भुलाणे ।
 वेद कतेब भुलाय के, मोहे लालच दुनी शैताणे ।
 सच्च किनारे रह गया, खैह मरदे बाहमण मउलाणे ।

सिरों न मिटे आवण जाणे । २१ । १ ।

"All the sections amongst Hindus and Mohammadans started decrying each other. Both Hindus and Muslims had their own different places of pilgrimage and rituals. They gave different names to one God Almighty. Forgetting the teachings of Vedas and Quran, they indulged in evil deeds and started fighting with each other. How could such people attain unity with Him?"

About the administration and the society Bhai Ji says :—

कल आई कुत्ते भुंही, खाज होवा मुरदार गुसाई ।
 राजे पाप कमाइंदे, उल्टी बाड़ खेत कज खाई ।
 परजा अन्धी ज्ञान बिन, कूड़ कुसत मुखहुं आलाई ।
 चले साज बजाइंदे, नचवन गुरु बहुत बिघ भाई ।
 सेवक बैठन घरां बिच, गुर उठ घरी तिनाड़े जाई ।
 काजी होए रिश्वती, बड्ढी लैके हक्क गंवाई ।
 इस्त्री पुरखे दाम हित, भावै आइ किथाऊ जाई ।

वरतया पाप समस जग माही । ३० । १ ।

“Dark time was prevailing and people could not differentiate between virtue and evil. The rulers who should defend and look after their subjects had become cruel. People due to lack of divine knowledge were indulging in evil actions. The Gurus were dancing to the tunes of disciples and paid homage to them. The upholders of law and justice were giving their verdict in favour of those who could bribe them. The sanctity of marriage gave way to love for money. In short, evil was dominating the people's actions.”

And he goes on to write :—

वरतया पाप जगत्र ते, धौल उडीना निस दिन रोआ ।
 बाझ दया बल हीन हो, निघर चलौ रसातल टोआ ।
 खड़ा इकेते पैर ते, पाप संग बड़ भारा होआ ।
 थम्मे कोइ न साध बिन, साध न दिस्से जग बिच कोआ ।

धरम धौल पुकारे तले खड़ोआ । २२ । १ ।

“Because of the evil prevailing everywhere the world was crying for a saviour to come to their deliverance.”

And when such were the conditions prevailing, Bhai Gurdas says that :

सुणि पुकार दातार प्रभ, गुर नानक जग माहि पठाया ।
 चरन धोइ रहिरास कर, चरनामृत सिक्खां पीलाया ।
 पार ब्रह्म पूरन ब्रह्म, कलिजुग अन्दर इक दिखाया ।
 चारे पैर धरम्म दे, चार वरन इक वरन कराया ।
 राणा रंक बराबरी, पैरी पवणा जग वरताया ।
 उल्टा खेल पिरम्म दा, पैरा उप्पर सीस निवाया ।
 कलिजुग बावे तारया, सत्तनाम पढ़ मन्त्र सुणाया ।

कलि तारन गुर नानक आया । २३ । १ ।

“God Almighty listened to the wailings of the people and sent the emancipator Baba Nanak who showed them the path of virtue, love and humanity. By giving the people the lesson of recitation of God’s Name, the Guru acted as a deliverer of humanity.”

During these times many religious faiths had cropped up and cunning and clever people had taught the people superstition so as to keep them within their bondage. But the advent of Guru Nanak broke their shackles and freed the captives. As Bhai Ji tells us :—

सतिगुर नानक परगट्या मिटी धुन्ध जग चानण होआ ।
 ज्यों कर सुरज निकलया तारे छपे अन्धेर पलोआ ।
 सिध बुके मिरगावली भन्नी जाये न धीर धरोआ ।
 जित्थे बाबा पैर धरे पूजा आसण थापण सोआ ।
 सिध आसण सब जगत दे नानक आदि मते जे कोआ ।
 घर घर अन्दर धरमसाल होवै कीरतन सदा विसोआ ।
 बाबे तारे चार चक्क नौ खण्ड पृथ्वी सच्चा दोआ ।

गुरमुख कलि विच परगट होआ । २७ । १ ।

“With the advent of Guru Nanak, the mist of superstition gave way to divine knowledge as the light of the sun makes the stars disappear or as the roar of a lion makes the wild life in the jungle run for life. Everywhere one heard the recitation of His Name. Baba came as the saviour of the world. In him a great man of God had appeared.”

Such were the times and the state of affairs in this country when Guru Nanak appeared on the scene.

CHAPTER II

EARLY LIFE AND THE CALL

गुरमुख कलि बिच परगट होआ । २७ । १ ।

(बार भाई गुरदास)

“The man of God has appeared in this dark age.”

—*Var Bhai Gurdas.*

On 15.4.1469, in the house of Bedis in a small village, named Talwandi, in the present district of Sheikhpura, in Pakistan, a child was born. We have the witness of the midwife who attended to Mata Tripta, the mother of the child, that the child did not cry but smiled like a fully grown up man. A strange phenomenon indeed. The father's name was Mehta Kalu Ji who was a revenue official in the service of Rai Bular, the village chief. Rai Bular's father Rai Bhoie was a Rajput convert to Islam. He was not a bigot but a God fearing man who treated all his subjects alike and was loved by the people. Rai Bular had all the qualities of his father.

Soon after the birth of the child, Pandit Hardayal drew up the horoscope of the child. He said that the child was to guide the destiny of mankind. He would rule over vast dominions. Apart from Hardayal, two other persons seem to have recognised the divine light which showed on the countenance of the child. They were the sister of the child—Bibi Nanki and the village chief Rai Bular. Rai Bular is said to be the first disciple of the divine child who in the days to come, was to become the world teacher. The name given to the child was Nanak Dev.

At the tender age of five Nanak Ji started teaching his play-mates to recite the name of Supreme Being. He had little interest in playing and was most of the time lost in thoughtful moods.

He would find great pleasure in feeding the mendicants and in fulfilling their needs. Mehta Kalu Ji did not relish his actions and felt disappointed. Did he realise that instead of giving him wordly things the divine child was to give him undying name? Mehta Ji did not know that he would be remembered for ever. Little did he know that there was the child who in days to come was

going to teach the world. At the age of six Nanak Ji was sent to school to study. Pandit Gopaldas, his teacher, found him quick at learning. He also was told by other children that Nanak Dev, in the absence of the teacher, asked them to recite the name of the Formless One, and that they would follow him as if they were under some magnetic spell. One day the Pandit saw with great interest, his pupil writing and humming something in mild tunes. For long the teacher saw his pupil and his heart quivered with joy, when he discovered that his pupil could compose hymn which a mature and highly spiritually devoted person could only do. In this calm atmosphere, the teacher was wondering at the intelligence of his pupil and the pupil was wondering at the greatness of his Master in whose praise the hymn was composed. Then the spell broke and the teacher asked the pupil to show him what he had written. Nanak Ji got up and respectfully gave the tablet (Patti) to his school master. The school master read the acrostic on the alphabet. This is the first composition of Guru Nanak and gives us the glimpses of his message to the suffering humanity. We may here give a few verses from this lengthy hymn.

ईडी आदि पुरुष है दाता, आपे सच्चा सोई ।

एनां अखरां महि जो गुरुमुख बूझे, तिस सिर लेख न होई ।

"The primal Lord is Giver and True. The pious man who understands His word will be freed for ever."

ससै सोई सृष्टि जिन साजी, सभना साहिब इक भया ।

सोवत रहे चित जिन का लागा, आया तिन का सफल भया ।

"The One who has created this world is the Master of all. Fortunate is the advent of those who remember Him."

खबे खुंदकार शाह आलम, कर खरीद जिन खर्च कीया

बंधन जाके सब जग बांधिया, अवरी का नही हुकम पया ।

He is the Creator, the Master and the Sustainer of his Slaves. None other but He controls the Universe."

चच्चा चार वेद जिन साजे, चारे थान चार जुगां ।

जुग जुग जोगी खाणी भोगी, पढ़िया पंडित आप धीया ।

He created four Vedas, the four sources of creation (egg, womb, earth and perspiration) and the four ages (Sat Yug, Treta Yug, Dwaper Yug and Kal Yug or golden, silver, brass and iron ages of Greece). He Himself dwells in everyone (yogi, house-holder or philosopher)".

जज्जे जाण मंगत जह जानै, लख चौरासी भीख भविया ।

ऐकै लेवै ऐकै देवै, अवर न दूजा में सुणिया ।

"His slaves yearn to have the knowledge of the cycles of transmigration. I have heard of no other Giver or Taker than Him.

डडे डफ करहु जीअ प्राणी, जो किछ होआ सो सभ चलया ।

तिसे सरेबुह तां सुख पावहु, सरब निरंतर रव रहिया ।

O Mortal ! why are you proud of your belongings. All that exists is transitory. Serve the All-pervading Lord and attain eternal bliss.

ढढे ढाए उसारे आपे, जो तिस भावे तिवे करै ।

कर कर वेखै हुकम चलाए, तिस निसतारे जा को नदर करै ।

He Himself creates and destroys as He Wills. He sees His orders being effected. He saves those who have earned His favour."

ततै तारु भवजल होवा, ताका अंत न पाया ।

न तर न तुल्हा, हम बूझस तार लए तारण ठाया ।

It is not possible to gauge the depth of this ocean of the world which we have to cross. Save us, O Lord ! we are drowning without a boat of spiritual guidance."

थथै थान थनन्तर सोई, जाका दीया सब होवा ।

किहा भरम किहा माया कहियै, जो तिस भावे सोई भला ।

"Every place is His creation.

Why have doubts ? Everything that pleases Him is good."

पप्यै पातसाह प्रमेसर, वेखण को परपंच कीया ।

देखै बूझै सब किछ पछाणे, अंतर बाहर रवि रहिया ।

"The Lord has made this world a play to behold it. He sees, understands and knows everything. He is within and without every part of His creation."

The school master who had already heard of the prophecy of Pandit Hardayal, recognised in the divine child the makings of a great man. He bowed to his pupil, and asked Mehta Kalu Ji to place his son under the charge of Pandit Brij Nath who could teach him Vedas and Shastras. After spending some time with Pandit Brij Nath and having learnt all what he considered necessary, the divine child left the school. He was then placed under the care of Maulvi Sayyad Hassan and Maulvi Kutab-u-din to learn Persian which in those days was the court language.

In 1478 A.D., when Nanak Ji had attained the age of nine, Mehta Kalu Ji made arrangements to invest his son with the sacred thread. Under great enthusiasm and rejoicing, the Vedic Mantras appropriate for the eventful occasion were chanted and necessary rituals were performed. At last pandit Hardayal proceeded to place the sacred thread around the neck of the child. Nanak Ji held up his hand and asked the pandit about the significance of the thread. Hardayal explained that a high caste Hindu, without the sacred thread, remained Shudra. The sacred thread which had been sanctified by chanting Mantras, purified the soul. Nanak Ji replied back, "How a thread which was made of ordinary cotton could have powers to purify the soul when no efforts were made to control the passions, greed and lust? The only way to purify the soul was to recite God's Name. That was the only thing he said which spiritually elevated the soul and helped it to merge with the Supreme Being." He then composed the following hymn :—

चउकड़ मुल्लि अणाइया बहि चौके पाया ।
 सिक्खां कति चढाइया गुरु ब्रह्मण थीया ।
 ओह मुआ ओ झड़ पइया वे तगा गइया ।
 लख चोरीयां, लख जारियां लख कूड़ीयां लख गालि ।
 लख ठगियां पैनामियां, रात दिनस जीअ नाल ।
 तग कपाहु कत्तिबै, बामण बट्टे आय ।
 कुह बकरा रिन्ह खाया सबको आखे पाय ।
 होये पुराणा सुटिये भी फिर पाईये होर ।
 नानक तगु न तुटई जे तग होवे जोर ।
 तग न इन्द्री तग न नारी, भलके थुक पवै नित दाढी ।
 तग न पैरी तग न हत्थी, तग न जिहवा तग न अखी ।
 वे तगा आपे वतै, बटि धागे अवरा घतै ।

(आसा म. १)

"An ordinary thread is placed round a man's neck. A Brahman acts as Guru by muttering instructions. But after the death the thread does not accompany the soul. Countless falsehoods and deception are practised by the wearer of this thread and yet the Brahman thinks that by performing this ceremony his duty is done. After feasting over the goat's meat every one thinks, that the thread has been sanctified. When this thread becomes old it is replaced. Nanak says,

that this thread, if it had inherent strength, would never get worn out. Because people don't control their passions they fall into disgrace. They don't have any thread to control the bad actions performed by different organs of the body. A Brahman who himself is without a true thread (pure living) has the cheek to prepare sacred threads for others.

(Guru Nanak in *Asa Di Var*)

In the following hymn the true purpose of the thread is explained :—

दइआ कपाह, सनतोखु सूत, जत गंदी, सत बट ।
 एहु जनेउ जीअ का, हई त पांडे घतु ।
 ना एहु तुटै, ना मल लगै, न एहु जले न जाय ।
 धन सो माणस नानका, जो गल चले पाय ।

(आसा म. १)

"Let mercy be the cotton, contentment be the fibre, continence the knot and righteousness be the twists. The thread prepared thus is really useful. O Pandit, if you can prepare such a thread, put it round my neck. It will neither get dirty nor get lost. Blessed are those who wear such a thread, says Nanak."

(Guru Nanak in *Asa Di Var*)

Again ;

नाए मनिआ पति ऊपजै, सालाही सच सूत ।
 दरगहि अंदर पाईआ, तग न तूटसि पूत ।

(आसा म. १)

"It is the thread prepared by the recitation of His Name which is accepted at His Court. Such a thread will neither break nor get worn out."

It may be seen that even during his childhood Guru Nanak laid stress on the recitation of God's Name. Mehta Kalu found his son taking a great deal of interest in solitude, animals and birds. In fact the beauty of nature and the unseen power of the Lord of the Universe fascinated him abundantly.

We may quote his following hymn as an example.

विसमाद नाद, विसमाद वेद, विसमाद जीअ विसमाद भेद ।
 विसमाद रूप, विसमाद रंग, विसमाद नागे फिरहि जंत ।
 विसमाद पडण, विसमाद पाणी, विसमाद अगनी खेडहि विडाणी ।
 विसमाद धरती, विसमाद खाणी, विसमाद सादि लगहि पराणी ।

विसमाद संजोगु, विसमाद विजोग, विसमाद भुख, विसमाद भोग ।
 विसमाद सिफति, विसमाद सालाह, विसमाद उज्जड, विसमाद राह ।
 विसमाद नेड़ै, विसमाद दूरि विसमाद, देखै, हाजरा हजूरि ।
 वेखि विडाण रहिया विसमाद, नानक बुझण पूरै भागि ।

(आसा. म. १)

“Wonderful is Thy Word and knowledge. Wonderful is Thy creation and the species. Wonderful are their forms and colours. Wonderful are the naked animals wandering on the earth. Wonderful is the wind and the water. Wonderful is the so useful fire. Wonderful is the earth and sources of production. Wonderful is the pleasure which fascinates Thy creation. Wonderful is Thy meeting and Thy parting. Wonderful is hunger and repletion. Wonderful are Thy praises and eulogies. Wonderful is the desert and the road. Wonderful Thy immanence and Thy transcendence. Wonderful to be in Thy presence. I wonder to behold all the wonderful things of Thy creation. Nanak, fortunate are those who are able to understand them.

(Guru Nanak in *Asa Di Var*)

कुदरति दिसै, कुदरति सुणीए, कुदरति भउ सुखसार ।
 कुदरति पाताली, आकासी, कुदरति सरब आकार ।
 कुदरति वेद पुराण कतेबा, कुदरति सरब बीचार ।
 कुदरति खाणा, पीणा पैनणु, कुदरति सरब पिआह ।
 कुदरति जाती जिनसी रंगी, कुदरति जीअ जहान ।
 कुदरति नेकीआ, कुदरति बदीआ, कुदरति मानु अभिमानु ।
 कुदरति पउणु पाणी बैसंतर, कुदरति घरती खाकु ।
 सभ तेरी कुदरति तूं कादिर करता, पाकी नाई पाकु ।
 नानक हुकमै अंदरि वेखै, वरतै ताको ताकु ।

(श्लोक म. १)

“By the grace of Thy power, we see, hear, fear and enjoy the pleasures of this world. Thy power has created the nether regions, and other creations. By the grace of Thy power have been produced Vedas, Puranas, and all other religious books. By the grace of Thy power we eat, drink and clothe. Thy power giveth us all love and affection. By Thy power are created all the different species of animal world. By Thy

power are there the virtues, vices, honour and dishonour. By Thy power have appeared the wind, water, fire and the earth. O Lord, everything in this world exists through the grace of Thy power. Thou art Omnipotent creator and holiest of all. Nanak says, everything is under Thy command and Thou beholdest everything. Thou art unrivalled.

(Guru Nanak in *Asa Di Var*)

Nanak Ji was asked by his father to look after the cattle. Like an obedient son he took up the job. One day as he was absorbed in meditation, the cattle went into the nearby fields. The owner of the field reported the matter to Rai Bular and his Mehta Kalu. Rai Bular, the village chief, had by now been convinced of the fact that the child was not an ordinary child. He had seen in him the makings of a great man. He adequately compensated the farmer and asked Kalu Ji not to get disturbed over the so-called eccentricities of the child. But Mehta Ji was a wordly man. He wanted his son to get into business and earn money. He thought that the so-called abnormal behaviour of his son was due to the child being possessed by an evil spirit. Mehta Ji called the village Mulla who used to sell amulets with God's Name written on them to drive evil spirits away. The Mulla came and wanted to tie the amulet on the arm of Nanak Ji. Nanak Ji stopped him from doing so and mildly rebuked him by uttering the following verse :—

घरिगु तिना का जीबिआ, जि लिखि लिखि वेचहि नाउ ।

खेती जिनकी उजड़े, खलवाड़े किआ खाउ ।

(बार सारंग म. १)

"Wretched is their life who write to sell God's name. Thrashing the burnt crop does not produce anything material."

(Guru Nanak in *Sarang*)

Nanak Ji told every one that he was not possessed by any evil spirit, but was mad in the love of the Supreme Being.

कोई आखै भूतना, को कहे बेताला ।

कोई आखै आदमी, नानक वेचारा ।

भइआ दिवाना साहु का नानक बउराना ।

हउ । हर । बिन । अवर । न । जाणा ।

"Some say I am evil spirit, eccentric and a hopeless man. But they do not know that Nanak is madly in love with the Supreme Being and knows none other than Him."

Again :

तउ दीवाना जाणीरै, जा एकी कार कमाए ।

हुकम पछाणै खसमु का, दूजी अवर सिआणप काए ।

(मरु म. १)

"I am mad to serve the Lord and I consider every other wisdom worthless. (Guru Nanak in *Maru*)

The Mulla and Mehta Kalu were both very much disgusted. Mehta Ji sent for the physician to investigate as to what disease his son was suffering from. The physician felt the child's pulse and did not find anything wrong. Nanak Ji said, "O simple and ignorant physician, it will not be possible for you to make any diagnosis."

वैद बुलाइआ वैदगी, पकडि हँडोले बाँहि ।

भोला वैद न जाणई, करक कलेजे माँहि ।

(बार मलार म. १)

"The physician is feeling my pulse to investigate into my ailment. The poor man does not know that I am suffering from the pangs (of love of the Lord) in my heart."

(Guru Nanak in *Malar*)

He told the physician about his real disease. He said :—

दुख वेछोड़ा, इक दुख भुख ।

(मलार म. १)

"I am suffering from the disease of separation from my Master and of the hunger of recitation of His Name."

(Guru Nanak in *Malar*)

Again he explained that the greatest disease was to forget the Lord and that he did not need any medicine.

खसम विसारि कीए रस भोग, ताँ तनि उठि खलोए रोग ।

मन अँधे को मिलै सजाइ, वैद न भोले दारु लाइ ।

(मलार म. १)

"When a man forgets Him and indulges in wordly pleasures he suffers from all diseases and gets the punishment. O, simple physician, do not prescribe any medicine for me as this is only the punishment for ignoring the Lord."

(Guru Nanak in *Malar*)

The physician went away telling Mehta Ji that there was nothing wrong with his son. Mehta Ji thought that marriage might divert his attention towards worldly matters. In 1488 A.D., at the age of 19 years, Nanak Ji was, therefore, married to Sulakhni daughter of Baba Mula Ji of village Batala. Nanak Ji got two sons Sri Chand Ji and Lakhmi Chand Ji. Married life also could not bring any change in his attitude. One day Mehta Ji gave his son some money to do some business in the village of Chuhar Kana, District Sheikhpura, now in Pakistan. On his way Nanak Ji met some people who were in need of food and clothing. Nanak Ji spent this money to provide these people with food and clothes. On return, the father, when told about the way the money was spent, lost his temper and scolded the son for wasting the money. Nanak Ji respectfully replied that, it was the best bargain he could make with that money. This exasperated the already disgusted father and he slapped his son.

At last Mehta Ji sent Nanak Ji to Sultanpur Lodhi, where the husband of Bibi Nanaki (Nanak Ji's sister), Jairam Ji, was working as Dewan to Nawab Daulat Khan Lodhi. With him also went Mardana, a musician, who used to play rebeck to the hymns Nanak Ji composed and sang. Nanak Ji was employed by Nawab Daulat Khan as a store-keeper. Apart from the monthly emoluments in cash, he was entitled to certain commission on the sale of grain, in kind. Here Nanak Ji started working with all the enthusiasm in his stores and in the evening he would sit at some quiet place and would sing the hymns in the praise of the Lord with Mardana playing the rebeck. Soon people started attending the divine kirtan. The people of Sultanpur developed love and respect for Nanak Ji and started calling him Baba Nanak. When his parents heard of the respect their child was commanding they visited Sultanpur. They were happy to see that their son had created a godly atmosphere there and even the Sultan held him in high esteem. When Mehta Ji asked if he had saved any money, the son replied that he only drew his salary which was sufficient for his household expenses and did not draw any commission. The father was very unhappy, and in disgust returned to his village.

One day a peculiar incident took place, Baba Nanak was weighing grains for a customer. He was counting each measure he weighed. When he counted thirteen which in Punjabi and

Hindi means TERA (its literal meaning is "I am Thine") he became so much fascinated by the word TERA that with each subsequent measure he counted only TERA. The news spread like wild fire. Some persons who had become jealous of him because of the respect and popularity he now commanded, reported to the Nawab that his store-keeper was not maintaining proper accounts and that grain was being misappropriated. A check, however, revealed that there had been no shortage but every thing was found in excess. The grains which Babaji would have drawn as a commission were never drawn and remained in the stores for needy people. It further raised Babaji's status in the eyes of Nawab Daulat Khan and the people of Sultanpur Lodhi. For twelve years at Sultanpur Babaji demonstrated to the people the art of true living.

By this time he had displayed the way of true living, as to how an honest house-holder could live in this world and yet discharge his social and spiritual obligations. As a poet also he had become quite mature. He had by then seen different stages of life, the pangs of separation from Him were ever increasing in his heart. And then the call came. One morning in 1497 A. D., he went to the near by river Bains, where each morning he used to go for a bath and disappeared. For three days there was no trace of him and people started guessing. Some said that he was drowned or killed by a wild animal, others said that in a fit of madness he had run away. Some jealous persons said that he had absconded after misappropriating stores. But on checking again, the stores items were found to be far in excess.

And then suddenly after three days, Baba Nanak transformed into the personality of Guru Nanak, the apostle of peace re-appeared. The slogan he uttered was: "There is no Hindu. There is no Muslim." He said that both Hindus and Muslims were not living according to the principles laid down by their respective religions. There is no difference between a Hindu and a Muslim. All are equal in the eyes of the Supreme Being. This generated quite a storm and the matter was reported to the Qazi and the Nawab. The Guru was summoned by the Nawab. When asked about his views that "there was no Muslim," Guru, Nanak replied that it was a fact that the Muslims were not living

the life of purity and honesty. He then gave the description of a true Muslim. He said :

मुसलमाण कहावण मुसकल, जां होए तां मुसलमाण कहावै ।
अबलि अउलि दीन करि मिठा, मसकलमाना मालु मुसावै ।
होए मुसलिम, दीन मुहानै, मरण जीवण का भरमु चुकावै ।
रब की रजाइ मने सिर उपरि, करता मने आपु गवावै ।
तउ नानक सरब जीआ मिहरंमति, होइ त मुसलमाण कहावै ।

(बार माझ म. १)

"To be a true Muslim is really difficult. To call himself a true Muslim, a man should possess the following qualities : Firstly, he should live according to the teachings of the Prophet. Secondly, he should shed pride. As per the teachings of the Prophet he should break the illusion about life and death. He should accept God's will and shed ego. Nanak says that if he is sympathetic towards his fellow beings, he is worthy of calling himself a Muslim."

(Guru Nanak in *Var Manjh*)

Guru Nanak then explained to the Nawab, the true Muslim's way of life :

मिहर मसीति सिदक मुसला, हक हलाल कुराण ।
सरम सुंनति सील रोजा, होहु मुसलमाण ।
करणी काबा सचु पीर, कलमा करम निवाज ।
तसबी सा तिस भावगी, नानक रखै लाज ।

(बार माझ म. १)

"Let compassion be thy Mosque, faith thy prayer mat, honest living thy Quran, humility thy circumcision, good conduct thy fast, pious life thy Kaaba, truth thy Pir, good actions thy prayer and acceptance of His Will thy rosary. Then, says Nanak, God will honour thee."

(Guru Nanak in *Var Manjh*)

The Guru then told the Nawab the true meaning of the five prayers :

पंजि निवाजा बखत पंजि, पंजा पंजे नाउ ।
पहला सच, हलाल दुइ, तीजा खैर खुदाइ ।
चउथी नीअत रासि मनु, पंजवी सिफति सनाइ ।
करणी कलमा आखि कै, तां मुसलमाण सदाइ ।
नानक जेते कूडिआर, कूडै कूडी पाइ ।

(बार माझ म. १)

"Let truth be thy first prayer, honest living the second, good actions the third, good intentions the fourth and praises of the Lord be the fifth prayer. Thus by saying the prayer of good deeds you become a true muslim. Rest are muslims in name only and achieve only falsehood."

Guru Nanak gave the correct concept of religion to the Nawab and the audience. He then told the Nawab that he had decided to resign his job. The Nawab did not like to release such a popular and honest official and pleaded with the Guru to stay in his service. But the Guru had already entered the service of the Highest Master and had made up his mind to go around the world and to spread the message of the Lord. Mata Tripta, the mother of Guru Nanak, entreated that he should not leave his job and his children, wife and parents. The Guru loved his mother passionately but the orders from the Supreme Being were all pressing. The Guru sang the following verse which meant that for him the all-important work was the mission assigned to him. That mission must have precedence over everything else :

हउ ढाढ़ी बेकार कारै लाइआ ।

राति दिहै दै वार धुरहु फुरमाइआ ।

ढाढ़ी सचै महलि खसमि बुलाइआ ।

सची सिफति सालाह कपड़ा पाइआ ।

सच्चा अमृत नाम, भोजन आइआ ।

गुरमती खाधा रजि तिनि सुखु पाइआ ।

ढाढ़ी करे पसाउ सबद बजाइआ ।

नानक सच सालाहि पूरा पाइआ ।

(माझ म. १)

"I, a bard of little consequence, have been assigned the mission (of spreading His Name) : I am at his beck and call. That is the Lord's will. This is the robe of honour and the recitation of His Name is my food. Nanak says that the perfect Lord is revealed to those who sing His praises."

He then convinced his mother and the other family members, of the importance of his mission, bade good-bye to his people and as Bhai Gurdas said :

चढ़िआ सोधण धरति लोकाई ।

"He set out on his mission to set the mankind on the path to realisation."

CHAPTER III

TRAVELS OF GURU NANAK

ਜਿਥੈ ਵਾਹਾ ਪੈਰ ਧਰੈ, ਧੂੜਾ ਆਸਨ ਥਾਪਨ ਸਾਭਾ ।

(ਵਾਰ ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ ਜੀ)

Where ever Baba Nanak went the places started humming with God's Name.

(Var Bhai Guru Das Ji)

Guru Nanak is said to have visited almost all the important religious places of both Hindus and Muslims in India. He is known to have visited many countries in the Arab Land and is said to have an interview with the then Sultan of Turkey. In Arab countries, even to this day, shrines in commemoration of his visits exist. Among Buddhist countries, Guru Nanak visited Ceylon and stayed with Raja Shiv Nabh the ruler of that country. He also visited Tibet where he is said to have met the Lamas. Sikh traditions tell us that the Guru visited China as well. This fact is further confirmed by the reference made to the Guru's visit to that country, in an address which was presented by the Chinese Government to Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru, our late Prime Minister when he visited China. During thirty years of his life which he spent touring all these countries, Guru Nanak covered a distance of almost 50,000 miles. His will to preach the religion of love and peace overcame all difficulties which came across his way. In those difficult days, he travelled through forests infested with wild life and robbers, through desert lands and through mountainous terrains where even with modern transport and equipment great difficulties are encountered. His travels give us ample proof that he had thoroughly studied the major religions of the world, viz., all branches of Hinduism, Islam and Buddhism. "There is a reason to believe," writes Cunningham, "that in his youth he made himself familiar with popular creeds of both Mohammadan and Hindus and that he gained a general knowledge of the Quran and the Brahminical Shastras."

"He was born great," writes Dr. G. C. Narang, "and was richly endowed by nature with a powerful intellect and strong commonsense..... whatever he said bore an impression so

originality and displayed the genius of a master mind... whenever he argued a point, his practical wisdom and strong commonsense always prevailed over the logic and theology of his opponents. Naturally meditative and thoughtful, his wisdom and knowledge was immensely increased by his life-long travels and discussions with scholars and saints both of his own as well as of the Mohammadan world.'

Although he mostly used Sadh Bhasha with Punjabi as dominant language for his writings, he had also working knowledge of Sanskrit, Hindi, Persian and Arabic. He was quick to learn different languages of the countries he visited where he had religious discourses with scholars and saints.

First Travel

(Travel to East, South-East and Central India)

Guru Nanak took leave from his parents, sister, wife and children and in 1498 A. D. set out on his first travel with Mardana a Muslim rebeck player. He stayed at Govindwal for a couple of days and then moved on to a place where now stands the Golden Temple at Amritsar. During his tours, wherever he stayed, people rushed to hear his melodious voice singing the praises of the Lord which gave spiritual food to their starving souls. After spending a week there, the Guru moved to Lahore and then to Saidpur now called Eminabad in Pakistan. Here he stayed at the house of a pious man named Lallo the carpenter. The divine music attracted more and more people and the chief of the village, Malik Bhago, invited Guru Nanak to stay at his place. The Guru told him that he (Guru) could not partake the food at his place because the Malik did not earn his money with honesty. His food, the Guru said, contained blood of the innocent people. On the other hand the food of the honest worker Bhai Lallo was like milk. Ill-gotten wealth, the Guru said, polluted the soul. The Malik took the advice to heart and promised to live a pious life.

Here Guru Nanak received a request from his first disciple Rai Bular, old and ailing, and went to Talwandi, his birthplace, to see him. After staying for a few days at Talwandi he moved towards Southern parts of Punjab and after covering a long distance through forests, reached Talamba where a deceiver named Sajjan lived. Ostensibly he was living the life of a pious man and had built a rest house where both Hindu and Muslim travellers

could rest and take food. But at night Sajjan and his men would rob them and kill them. After having their meals the Guru asked Mardana to play his rebeck and he started singing the following hymns :

उजल केहा चिलकणा, घोटम कालड़ी मसु ।
 धोतिआ जूठ न उतरे, जे सउ धोवा तिसु ।
 बगा बगे कपड़े, तीरथ मंझ वसनि ।
 घट घट जीआ खावणे, बगे न कहीअनि ।
 चाकरीआ चंगिआईआ, अवर सिआणप कितु ।
 नानक नाम संमालि तूं, बघा छुटहि जितु । (सूही म. १)

“Bronze which sparkles bright becomes black after rubbing it and its blackness does not disappear even if it is washed hundred times. The Heron with white robes living at place of pilgrimage leads a cruel life. His outward purity is deceptive.... O Nanak, without the name of God, service, goodness and cleverness are of no avail.”

(Guru Nanak in *Rag Suhi*)

The cruel and callous heart of Sajjan the deceiver and murderer found the melodious and deep notes of the divine music penetrating. Sajjan saw his real self for the first time. He realised that he had been wasting his life which could have otherwise been spent in the service of humanity. He bowed before Guru Nanak and told him all about he had been doing. The Guru advised him to lead a pious and honest life in the service of humanity. He was the first missionary commissioned by Guru Nanak. The den of vice and deceit was converted into Dharam Sal where the passersby were offered food and shelter.

After commissioning Sajjan, Guru Nanak moved towards Pak Pattan to visit the shrine of a Mohammadan Saint and Philosopher, Sheikh Farid. Here he had a talk with the presiding priest Sheikh Brahm. The Sheikh belonged to the Sufi Sect of Islam which believed that the world was full of sins. To reach the Lord, one must live away from the worldly people. Sheikh Brahm had doubts about this theory and, therefore, discussed it threadbare with the Guru. Guru Nanak cleared his doubts and during the long discussion, told him that one could attain Him while living the normal house-holder's life and doing service to humanity. In reply to a couplet of Sheikh Farid :

फरीदा पाड़ि पटोला धज करी, कंबलड़ी पहरेड ।
जिनी वेसी सहु मिले, सोई वेस करेड ।

(श्लोक फरीद जी)

"I am ready to tear all of my clothes and live only in a shawl if such a wear can lead me to the Lord."

(Sheikh Farid)

The Guru is said to have replied:—

काए पाड़ पटोला धज करी, कमली पहरहि काइ ।
घर बैठै सहु पाइयै, जे मन राखे थाइ ।

"Why tear the clothes and wear only shawl. If mind is integrated, God can be realised at home also."

And—

घर ही मँधि व हेसि पिर, नित झरे संमाले ।
मिलदिया बिल न होवई, जे नीजत रास करेइ ।

"The bride wails because her Spouse is away. But if the mind is integrated He could be met immediately."

In reply to another query from the Sheikh—

एक साहिब, दोइ हदी ।
केहिड़ा सेवी, केहिड़ा रदी ।

"There is one Lord but are two ways (Hindu and Muslim) of worship. Which of these two should be accepted?"

The Guru replied :

इकौ साहिब, एका हद ।
इकै सेवै ते दूजा रद ।

"There is only one God and only one way leads to Him. Worship only Him and none else."

And

दूजा काहे सेवीअै, जमै ते मरि जाइ ।
एको सिमरहु नानका, जल थल रहिआ समाइ ।

"Why worship those who take birth and die? Nanak says, serve the One Lord who dwells in land as well as in water."

At the request of Sheikh Brahm, Guru Nanak stayed at Pakpattan for a few more days, collected some of the hymns composed by Sheikh Farid, the founder of the sect and then moved on to Kurukshetra on his way to Hardwar.

At the time Guru Nanak reached Kurukshetra, there had been great gathering because of the solar eclipse fair. The priestly class had told the people that on that day sun god was being engulfed by two demons Rahu and Ketu, and that people should give alms to the Brahmins to save the sun god from the clutches of the demons. The Guru told the people that the eclipse was a natural phenomenon and that the sun was not being devoured by the demons. Pandit Nanu, the leader of the Brahmins met the Guru and protested against his cooking meat on such a day. Guru Nanak told Pandit Nanu that there was nothing wrong in cooking and eating meat. He advised them that any concept, however good, should not be stretched to the point of looking farce and stupid. He said :

मास मांस कहि मुख जगड़े, गिआन धिआन नहीं जाने ।

कडण मांस कडण लाग कहावे, किस महि पाप समाणे ।

गेडा मारि होम जग कीए, देवतिया की बाणे ।

मांस छोड़ बसि नकु पकड़हि, राती माणस खाणे ।

बड़ करि लोका नो दिखलावहि, गिआन धिआन नहीं सूझै ।

नानक अंधे सिउ किया कहिअँ, कहै न कहिआ बूझै ।

(बाद मलार म. १)

"The ignorant people debate over eating of meat but lack wisdom and deep thought. They fight as to which food—animal or vegetable—is sinful to take. At the time of Yagna men offer meat to gods. Some do not even stand the smell of meat and yet suck the blood of poor and innocent people. They make fetish before the people but lack real wisdom. What should Nanak tell the ignorant fellow who neither knows nor hears."

(Guru Nanak in *Rag Malhar*)

Preaching the doctrine of fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man, Guru Nanak moved to Karnal and then to Panipat where he met Sheikh Sharf a Sufi saint. The Sheikh on seeing the Guru, took him for a Muslim and gave the Mohammadan Salutation "Salam Alaikum" (Peace be on you). Guru Nanak replied "Salam Alekh" (Salutation to the invisible one). The Pir was astonished to hear such a salutation. Both exchanged thoughts and the Pir became the disciple of the Guru. Guru Nanak then went to Delhi and had an interview with the Emperor Sikandar Lodhi who was a great bigot and cruel. The Guru told the

Emperor that he should treat all his subjects alike and should not discriminate on the basis of religion. Every one is His creation. The Emperor, he said, will have to answer to the Lord for his misdeeds. The Emperor's fanatic and ill conceived zeal for Islam was taking him away from the path of righteousness. Guru Nanak advised him to correctly understand the teaching of the Prophet—Fatherhood of God and Brotherhood of man. The emperor bowed before the Guru and repented for his misdeeds.

After a few days stay at Delhi, Guru Nanak went to Hardwar where he saw people throwing water towards the sun. On enquiry he was told that the water offered to the sun and the alms given to Brahmins would reach their ancestors in the next world. Guru Nanak faced towards the West and started throwing water. The people laughed at him and asked him as to what he was doing. The Guru replied that he was irrigating his fields at Kartarpur about 300 miles away. "How could that water reach so far away?" they asked. The Guru replied, "If the water and food could reach your ancestors who are millions of miles away, the water thrown by me should also reach Kartarpur." He told the people that superstitious and irrational ceremonies did not kindle love for God, in the mind of a person. The correct way to attain Him was to recite His name and to love His creation. He also advised the people and also the Brahmins that giving and taking of alms in order that these things may reach their dead ancestors, was not a rational thing. Nothing could reach the dead. Under the influence of this superstition (that foodstuff and other material could reach the dead through Brahmins) some people even commit crimes to get money for such formalities and ceremonies. The Guru asked Mardana to play the rebeck and sang the following hymn :

जे मोहा का घर मुहै, घर मुहि पितरी देइ ।
 अगै वसतु सझाणीअ, पितरी चोर करेइ ।
 बढीअहि हथ दलाल दे, मसफी एह करेइ ।
 नानक अगै सो मिले, जि खटे घाले देइ ।

(आसा म. १)

"If a robber after committing robbery gives the robbed money, to a go-between Brahmin, to be passed on to the robber's ancestors, the robber is actually making his ancestors

also a party to the theft. And justice demands that the hand of the go-between Brahmin should be cut off. Nanak says, that only money earned with honesty and given for good cause can be of some avail."

(Guru Nanak in *Asa Di Var*)

The people listened to him in rapt attention and then bowed before him in reverence.

At Hardwar Guru Nanak went to a Brahmin who, after taking bath, had entered his cooking square. On seeing a stranger entering his cooking square, the Brahmin lost his temper. He rebuked the Guru for polluting his cooking square. The Guru replied him in all humility that that was the height of hypocrisy. "You are worried," he said "more about external purity than about the purity of mind." Lot of people collected to hear the arguments. Mardana played the rebeck and the Guru sang the following hymns :

देके चउका कढी कार, उपरि आइ बैठे कुड़िआर ।
मनु भिटै वे मनु भिटै, एहु अंनु असाडा फिटै ।
तनु फिटै फेड़ करेनि, मनि जूठे चुली भरेनि ।
कहु नानक सचु धिआईअै, सुच होवे ता सच पाईअै ।

(वार आसा म. १)

"People plaster a place and then draw a line around it. They consider this place purified and if any one touched their food inside this place, they consider the food as polluted. They forget that their bodies are already polluted by bad actions and that their minds are unclean. Nanak says that union with the Lord can only be achieved by the recitation of His Name and purity of mind."

(Guru Nanak in *Asa Di Var*)

He also told the confounded Brahmin :

कुबुधि डूमणी, कुदइआ कसाइणि, पर निदा घर चूहड़ी ।
मुठी करोध चंडाल । कारी कढी किआ थिअै, जा चारे बैठिआ नाल ।

"What is the good of making out of cooking square when person cannot get rid of evil things like ignorance, cruelty, talking ill of others, pride and anger."

It is the purity of mind and not the purity of the body only which should be the aim of a person :

ਸੂਚੇ ਏਹਿ ਨ ਆਖੀਐਹਿ ਬਹੁਨਿ ਜੇ ਪਿਡਾ ਧੋਇ ।
ਸੂਚੇ ਸੇਏ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਜਿਨ ਸਨਿ ਵਸਿਆ ਸੋਇ ।

(ਵਾਰ ਆਸਾ ਮ. ੧)

"Purity is not achieved by only taking bath. Purity is achieved by always remembering the All Pervading Lord."

(Guru Nanak in *Asa Di Var*)

After spending a few days at Hardwar, the Guru moved on to the east and reached a place called Gorakh Matta now known as Nanak Matta in Uttar Pradesh. Here he met the Yogis who were the disciples of Guru Gorakh Nath who preached the science of Hath Yoga, which says that the activities of mind could be controlled through certain mental and physical exercises. It is said that through such exercises occult powers to perform miracles, could be achieved. The Guru during their discourse told the Yogis to shed pride and not to shun the world. Instead of using this science for personal benefits and for acquiring supernatural powers which generate pride and ego in the minds of a person, they should utilise the powers for the good of mankind. The real Yoga, the Guru said was to live a life of detachment in this world of attachments. A detailed account of Guru Nanak's discourses will be given later in this book when his visits to Mount Sumer and other places of Yogis are described.

When Guru Nanak left Nanak Matta, Yogi Machchander Nath also accompanied him to enjoy the soul-stirring music. On their way, the party halted at a place about 30 kilometres from Nanak Matta. They sat under a soap-nut (*Rethha*) tree, the fruit of which are very bitter. The Yogi was feeling hungry. The Guru advised him to remove some nuts from the branches (under which the Guru was resting) and eat. Reluctantly the Yogi removed some nuts. To his astonishment they were sweet. But the nuts on the other branches of the tree were bitter. This tree exists even to-day and bears sweet nuts on one side and bitter ones on its other.

After passing through different parts of Uttar Pradesh, Guru Nanak reached Benaras, now known as Varanasi. Here the Brahmins asked him as to why he did not have Saligram, Tulsi or rosary. The Guru replied that he worshipped only one God and none else. He advised the Brahmins :

सालगराम बिध पूजि मनावहु, सकुनु तुलसी माला ।
 राम नाम जपु वेड़ा बाधहु, दइआ करहु दइआला ।
 काहे कलरा सिचहु, जनमु गंदावहु ।
 काची दहगि दिवाल, काहे गच लावहु ।

(बसंत म. १)

"O Brahmin, let God be thy idol, living of purity thy rosary of Tulsi. Worship the All Supreme Lord and ask for his mercy. Don't waste your time in watering barren land and do not plaster the mud wall, because it is sure to fall."

(Guru Nanak in *Basant*)

The Brahmin was, after further discussion, convinced that pure and honest living and recitation of the Name was the only way to unite with Him and there was no use in wasting time in performing idle ceremonies.

Guru Nanak then went to Patna where he met Salis Rai the jeweller and his servant Adharka. The Guru expounded the philosophy of recitation of God's Name and of living the life of detachment in this world. He advised these two good men to live in this world like lotus and not like frog in the water. The lotus flower, the Guru said, remains in water and dirt and yet keeps detached from both. But the frog eats all the dirt.

बिमल मझारि बससि निरमल जल, पदमनि जावलरे ।
 पदा मनि जावल जल रस संगति, संग दोख नहीं रे ।
 कादर तूँ कबहि न जानस रे ।
 भखसि सिबाल बससि निरमल जल, अमृत न बखसि रे ।

(मारु म. १)

"The lotus flower is found in the clean water and dirt but remains free of both. Frog also lives with clean water and dirt but eats the dirt and discards the nectar.

(Guru Nanak in *Rag Maru*)

Salis Rai and Adharka became devotees and were entrusted to preach the mission of Guru Nanak in those parts of the country.

Moving further eastward, Guru Nanak stayed at Gaya and talked to Pandas and then marched to Assam where he met a wicked woman. Her name was Parbati but she was better known as Nur Shah after the name of her teacher who had taught her hypnotism. She used her knowledge of this science to ridicule

people. According to fundamentals of this science the mind of a person can be made to think and believe in a particular way through auto-suggestions. A person with a comparatively weak mind is influenced more easily. She tried her tricks on Guru Nanak but her tactics did not have any effect on that powerful mind which was already under the influence of the Lord's spell. When Nur Shah failed to produce any effect on Guru Nanak, in perfect coolness he spoke to her :

कलर दिया वणजारिआ, झूगे मुसक मगन ।

अमला बाझहु नानका, किउ करि कंत मिलन ।

"Women like you who indulge in such bad actions cannot hope to meet the Lord."

Guru Nanak advised her to leave this habit of ridiculing others and serve the humanity and recite the Name of God. That was the essence of happy and good life. It is said that thereafter she led a virtuous life.

Guru Nanak, while touring through Bengal and Orissa, passed through a thick forest where resided a cannibal named Kauda. Kauda was happy to find good prey and advanced towards the Guru. And then both looked into each other's eyes. The peace and glory in the mind coupled with radiance in the eyes of the messenger of love and peace made a marked effect on Kauda's black heart. Mentally shaken, Kauda felt ashamed of his past deeds and fell at the lotus feet of Guru Nanak. While in Bengal, Guru Nanak is said to have visited the birth place of Bhagat Jai Dev.

Walking through different parts of South East India, Guru Nanak reached Jagan Nath Puri. When the chief priest of Puri heard that a stranger had arrived in the holy city, he invited the Guru at the time of Arti. Mystic poet with keen perception of Reality as he was, he outside the temple, performed Arti in his own way. His Arti was offered to the Formless One, the Primal Lord, the Creator, Saviour and Sustainer. Mardana played the rebeck. The deep and melodious notes in the praise of the Lord pierced through the hearts of the listeners :

आरती

गगन में थाल, रवि चन्द्र दीपक बनें, तारिका मंडल जनक मोती ।

धूप मल्लान लो पवन चबरो करे, सगल बन राय फूलन्त ज्योती ।

कैसी आरती होई भव खंडना तेरी आरती, अनहता शब्द वाजन्त भेरी ।१।
 सहस तब नैन नन नैन है तोहि को, सहस मूरति नना एक तोहि ।
 सहस पद विमल नन एक पद गंध बिनु, सहस तब गंध इव चलत मोहि ।२।
 सब महि ज्योति ज्योति है सोइ, तिसदै चानण सब महि चानण होइ ।
 गुरु साखी ज्योति परगट होइ, जो तिस भावै मु आरती होइ ।३।
 हरि चरण कमल मकरन्द लोभित, मनो अनदिनो मोहि आहि पिआसा,
 कृपा जल देहि नातक सारिग को, होइ जाते तेरे नाइ वासा ।४।

(धनाश्री महला १)

"I offer for Thy worship, O Lord, the salver of the sky studded with pearls of sun, moon and galaxy of stars. The sandal-wood provides Thee the fragrance. The wind and flowers fan Thee. Thus O wonderful Lord, Thy worship is going on. Thousands are Thy eyes yet Thou art without an eye. Thousands are Thy Forms yet Thou art Formless. Thousands are Thy feet yet Thou hast no feet. Thousands are Thy noses yet Thou hast no nose. All this is so charming. Thy light is every where and lighteth all hearts through the Guru's words. Whatever pleases Thee, my Lord, is Thy worship. Day and night like a bee which longs for flowers, I crave to have the pleasure to be at Thy feet. Thy slave Nanak begs of Thou to grant him Thy Mercy so that he may merge in Thy Name."

(Guru Nanak in *Rag Dhanasri*)

Guru Nanak advised the people at Puri to worship the only One All Pervading Lord.

By this time Mardana had become home sick. Both of them had been touring the country almost for 11 years. He requested the Guru to return to Punjab and the Guru agreed. Guru Nanak with Mardana moved homeward. They passed through Rohil Khand where the Guru met the Rohilla Chief and advised him to treat all his subjects alike. Travelling through Uttar Pradesh and Haryana and spreading the gospel of love and peace, the Guru reached Sultanpur in December 1509 A.D. People rushed to see him. He stayed at Sultanpur for a few days where people enjoyed the divine music, and then went to Talwandi his birth place. Innumerable admirers from nearby places came to meet him. His parents also went to see him. The Guru bowed before his father and mother. His father, mother, wife, children and others

entreated before him not to leave them again. He listened to them calmly and then to the musical notes of Mardana's rebeck he sang the following hymn which revealed to the people the actual state of his mind :—

आखा जीवा विसरे मर जाउ ।
 आखण अउखा साचा नाउ ।
 साचे नाम की लागै भूख । उतु भूखै खाइ चलीअहि दूख ।
 सो किउं बिसरै मेरी माइ । साचा साहिब साचै नाइ । रहाउ ।
 साचे नाम की तियु बडिआई । आख थके कीमत नहीं पाई ।
 जे सभि मिलि कै आखण पाहि । बडा न होवै घाट न जाइ ।
 न उह मरै न होवै सोग । देंदा रहे न चूकै भोग ।
 गुण एहो होर नाहीं कोइ । ना को होआ ना को होइ ।
 जे बड आप ते बड तेरी दाति । जिनि दिनु करके कीति राति ।
 खसम विसारहि ते कमजाति । नानक नावै बाझ सुनाति ।

(आसा म. १)

“I live when I recite His Name and I die when I forget Him. I am hungry for the True Name which only can rid me of all the pains. O mother, how can I forget Him who is the True Lord. None has ever been able to assess the greatness of the Priceless One. There is no other like Him. He is the Maker of day and night. Those who forget Him are worthless. Nanak says, wretched is the lot of those who do not recite the True Name.”

(Guru Nanak in *Rag Asa*)

In this way his first travels through Eastern, South Eastern and Central India came to a close.

Second Travel

(Tour through different parts of Punjab)

After staying for a few days at Talwandi, Guru Nanak set out for a tour of Southern Punjab. Passing through Dipalpur, Kangsar, Kasur, Patti, etc., he reached Sultanpur where he met his beloved sister, her true disciple, and other followers. The Guru then toured through different parts of Punjab. He visited Varrowal, Jallalabad, Kiri Pathanan and Pakpattan where he once again met his old friend Sheikh Brahm with whom he stayed for a few days and held spiritual discussions. From Pakpattan Guru

Nanak went on to Saidpur and stayed with Bhai Lallo. Bhai Ji was very depressed and he told the Guru that the relation between the ruler and the subject were very much strained and that the rulers were being cruel and tyrant. The tender heart of the Guru was deeply influenced. He sat quietly for a long time and then asked Bhai Mardana to play rebeck. The word had come. He sang the following hymn which gave the glimpses of still darker times to come. It was a prophecy of the invasion by Moghuls and also about the close of their reign. It predicted the advent of the Moghuls in 1578 of Bikrami calender which corresponds to 1521-22 A.D. and its close by 1597 Bik. corresponding to 1540-41 A.D. Now about the actual year of the close of the Moghul empire, there are two versions. One says that it relates to 1597 Bik. (1540-41) when Sher Shah Suri defeated the Moghul Army. Hamayun was expelled from the country and Sher Shah Suri became the Emperor of India. The second version says that it relates to the invasion of Nadar Shah in 1797 Bik (1739-40 A.D.) when Moghul army was routed and Nadar Shah entered Delhi as a victor. It appeared that the House of Babar had, by then, accomplished its cycle of existence.

The mention of the rise of a "disciple of the Hero" in all probability, relates to the rise of the Khalsa, the disciple of Guru Govind Singh—the Great Hero.

The complete verse is given below :

जैसी म आवैं खसम की बाणी, तैसड़ा करी ज्ञान वे लालो ।
 पाप की जंज लै काबलों धाया, जोरी मंगे दान वे लालो ।
 सरम-धरम दोये छप खलोये कूड़ फिरे परधान वे लालो ।
 काजियां, बामणा की गल थकी, अगद पड़े शैतान वे लालो ।
 मुसलमानियां पड़े कतेबां, कण्ट मैं करे खुदाए वे लालो ।
 जात सनाती होर हिन्दवाणियां, एहे बी लेखै लाये वे लालो ।
 खून के सोहिले गविहै नानक, रत का कुंगू पाये वे लालो ।
 साहिब के गुण नानक गावै, मास पुरी विच आख मसोला ।
 जिन उपाई रंग रबाई, बैठा वेखै बखि इकेला ।
 सचा सो साहिब सच तपावस, सचड़ा न्याओं करेग मसोला ।
 काया कपड़ टुक टुक होसि, हिन्दुस्तान संभालसी बोला ।
 आवण अठतरै जान सत्तनवै, होर भी उठसि मरद का चेला ।
 सच की बाणी नानक आखै, सच सुणायसि सच की बेला ।

(तिलंग महला १)

"I tell thee O Lallo as I get the word from the Lord. With a huge crowd of sin as the marriage party, he will come from Kabul and will snatch away India's wealth. Righteousness and honour will disappear. Evil and vice shall prevail everywhere.

Brahmins and Qazis will not perform the conjugal ceremonies. The devil will himself be there to do this job. Mohammadan women, with deep agony, will read their religious books and will call upon God for help. The Hindu women will also suffer the same terrible woe.

O Nanak, the song of death will be sung everywhere and blood will be used for saffron marks.

In this land of dead, Nanak sings the praises of the Lord and gives warnings about the coming events.

The Creator setting aloof will see all this happenings. People, according to their deeds get justice from the True Lord. Human bodies will be cut into pieces like shreds of cloth. India will know the truth of what I say.

They will come in '78 and will go in '97 and a disciple of the Hero will rise in this land.

Nanak has said as the True Lord wills and will proclaim the rest when these things come to pass."

(Guru Nanak in *Tilang*)

Moving westward, Guru Nanak went to Sialkot, where he met two Muslim Saints Hamza Gaus and Mian Mitha. The Guru sat under a Berry tree where now stands a Gurdwara.

Pir Hamza Gaus, it was popularly believed, had acquired occult powers by virtue of which he performed miracles for good and for bad. He once became angry with a local Khattri and cursed the whole population. He said within seven days the city of Sialkot would meet its doom. People were awe stricken. When the Guru came to know of this, he advised the Pir that man of God should always think of good of the people and should not shower curses on them. The Pir realised his folly.

At the instance of Pir Abdul Rahman who was a great admirer of Guru Nanak, Pir Mian Mitha of Mithan Kot also met Guru Nanak to get some of his doubts clarified. Pir Mian Mitha asked the Guru the following questions and got their reply.

1. Which religion God loved the most ?

Guru Nanak replied that God loved the religion of pious people.

2. What is the position of the founder of a religion ?

Guru Nanak replied that religious heads were teachers who showed to the people the path which would lead them to Him. They could not hold promises to their followers for any kind of intercession on their behalf with God.

3. What is the true worship which would bring harmony in life ?

Guru Nanak replied that the knowledge acquired from the books and utilised for the service and betterment of humanity was true worship and could make a person lead harmonious life.

Guru Nanak spent some time at Sialkot where people enjoyed Hari Kirtan performed by him and then he moved on to Lahore. A wealthy man of Lahore named Seth Duni Chand met the Guru and requested him to join the Shradh ceremony of his father. In reply to a question from the Guru, the Seth explained that he was feeding holy men so that the food might reach his dead father. The Guru gave the Seth a small needle and asked him to keep it in safe custody and to return the same to him in the next world. The Seth replied that it was not possible for him to carry the needle to the next world. "How can then the food given to Brahmins reach your parents ?" the Guru asked. Guru Nanak told Duni Chand that men of wealth should not squander money in these ways. They should spend money for the betterment of humanity at large. They should act as trustees and custodians and use the money for the benefit of their less fortunate brethren. The reward one got in the next world was not for what one spent in these rituals and formalities but for what one earned with honest working and sharing it with his fellow-beings.

ਨਾਨਕ ਅਗੇ ਸੋ ਮਿਲੇ ਜੇ ਖਟੇ ਘਾਲੇ ਦੇਵ ।

(ਬਾਰ ਆਸਾ ਮ. ੧)

"Nanak, one is rewarded for what one earns with honest efforts and shares with his fellow beings."

(Guru Nanak in *Var Asa*)

Another Seth Karori Mal of Lahore was very much impressed by the teachings of the Guru and founded a village named Kartarpur which in the later years became the headquarters of

his mission—"that religion if practised in true sense becomes the basis of socialism." Guru Nanak demonstrated to the people that how people could live on co-operative basis and lead a happy life.

At Kartarpur a boy of tender age named Bura, was a regular visitor of the holy congregation. One day the Guru called the boy and found him quite intelligent for his age. He named the child as Budha (old man) who in later days was known as the greatest Sikh of his time and had the rare privilege of performing the succession ceremony till the Sixth Guru. He in history is known as Baba Budha or Bhai Budha.

Third Travel

(Tour to the South)

Guru Nanak stayed at Kartarpur for some time like a householder. He organised his mission which taught the people the religion of love, fraternity and active service. Leaving the affairs at Kartarpur in the hands of his able disciples like Bhai Bhagirath and others, Guru Nanak in 1510 A. D. left again—this time towards South to preach his mission. Passing through different towns and villages and giving the people the pleasure of the heavenly and divine music, Guru Nanak reached Sirsa in the present district of Hissar. Here Khwaja Ahmad Shakur and his disciples met him and asked him if the penances and fasts could lead a person to the ultimate goal of unity with the Lord. The penances and fasts, the Guru replied, were good to discipline the body but the ultimate goal could only be achieved by meditating on His Name and by active service to humanity. It generally happened that people who indulged in penances and austerities became completely detached, isolated and quite conscious of their superiority over the householders. That filled them with pride, contempt and hate which acted as a brake on the further advancement of their minds. At Sirsa the Guru is said to have stayed for over four months.

Travelling through different parts of Southern Punjab and Rajasthan he reached Bikaner, a stronghold of Jains. Here the Guru stayed at the house of a low caste man. The people of so called high castes were scandalised. They met him and questioned him as to why he being a saint and a Khattri stayed at the

house of an untouchable. The Guru replied that he did not consider that any one belonged to low or high caste. Every body was equal to the other in the eyes of the Creator. It is the actions of a person and not the birth which made him high or low. He gave them the description of a true Brahmin and a true Khattri :

सो ब्राह्मण जो बिन्दे ब्रह्म । जपु तपु संजमु कमावै करम ।

सील सन्तोख का राखै धरम ।

बन्धन तोड़ै होवै मुक्तु । सोई ब्राह्मण पूजन जुगतु ।

(श्लोक म. १)

"Only he who knows what is God, practices contemplation, discipline and self-control can be called a Brahmin. A person who, possesses contentment and character and lived a life of detachment in this world is worthy of all respects."

(Shalok of Guru Nanak)

Again :

खत्री सो जो करमा का सूर । पुन दान का करे सरीर ।

खेत पछाणे बीजै दान । सो खत्री दरगह परवाण ।

(श्लोक म. १)

"A true Khattri is a hero in deeds and is full of compassion. He considers everything at his command for good of public. Such a Khattri is acceptable at the court of the Lord "

(Shalok of Guru Nanak)

During his stay at Bikaner, Guru Nanak met some of Jain holymen. During discussion the Guru told them that they were making mockery of non-violence by stretching this principle to the limits of absurdity. They shunned water and did not take bath lest they might harm microbes. But they drank water and thus devoured millions of microbes contained in water. They, after passing stool, spread out their excreta so that any life in that might not get perished. How unclean these habits were? Instead of doing all that and passing a life of idleness which made them a burden on society, he said, these holymen should lead worldly life and be of some service to the humanity.

From Bikaner Guru Nanak moved on to Ajmer and then passing through Rajasthan and Central India, he entered the present state of Andhra. It is during his tour of Southern India, perhaps, that he received a request from one of his disciples, Mansukh, an Indian doing some business in Ceylon. The message

communicated the desire of the ruler of Ceylon, Raja Shiv Nabh, to see the Guru. After a circuitous tour of South India, Guru Nanak reached Cape Comrin and then took a boat to Ceylon. The ruler of Ceylon came to receive him. During their talk Raja Shiv Nabh asked the Guru the definition of a true Yogi or a Brahmin. The reply of Guru Nanak was :

जोगी जूगति नाम निरमाइल, ताके मैल न राती ।
 प्रीतिम नाथ सदा सच संगै, जनम मरण गत बीती ।
 ब्रह्मण ब्रह्म ज्ञानइ स्तानी, हरगुण पूजै पाती ।
 एको नाम एको नारायण, बिभुवन एका जोती ।

(मारु म. १)

"The true Yogi is he who knows the way of the Pure Name. The Beloved Master of Universe always is with him. A true Brahmin is he who is full of God's wisdom and worships Him only—the One whose Light illuminates the whole world."

(Guru Nanak in *Maru*)

The Raja then asked as to how a person could get rid of death and birth. The Guru replied :

गुरुमुख मुक्तो बन्धु न पाइ । सबद विचार छूटै हर नाइ ।
 नाम संजोगी गोयल थाट । काम क्रोध फूटै बिख माट ।
 मनु तनु दै लै सहज सुभाइ । नानक तिनके लागो पाइ ।

(गोउडी म. १)

"The men who have faith in God are freed from the bondage of birth and death because they understand the value of True Name..... Those who merge themselves in Name consider this world as a pasture halt and rid themselves of vices..... O Nanak, those who surrender themselves to God, find a place at His Feet."

(Guru Nanak in *Gauri*)

Raja Shiv Nabh discussed with the Guru the theory of Karma. The Raja was so much impressed by the Guru that he requested the Guru to stay with him in his palace and that he would, instead of offering any other conveyance, would like to carry the Guru on his shoulders. Guru Nanak smiled and replied that his place was amongst people and not away from the people. He advised Raja Shiv Nabh to build a Dharamsal (Public Hall) where all could assemble and enjoy the Divine music. In this

hall Guru Nanak performed Kirtan and the ruler and his subjects enjoyed the hymns sung in the praise of the Lord. Guru Nanak then toured through different parts of that country and composed his work *Pransangli*. The fifth Guru, Arjan Dev, sent Bhai Piara who brought this composition from Ceylon. This composition has not been included in the Granth Sahib. Perhaps it arrived much after the fifth Guru had finalised the composition of the Granth Sahib and appended his signature at the end. Bhai Piara's notes give us glimpses of the places Guru Nanak visited on his way back to India.

After spending some time in Ceylon, Guru Nanak retraced his steps. He took a ship from Japapatan and crossed over to the mainland. He passed through Rameshwaram, Nagapatan, Tanjour and many other places. He met holymen and discussed spiritualism with them. He entered Kalji Ban and met Yogi Bhartari, the chief of yogies and sidhas. After dispelling his doubts about the true yoga, the Guru moved on to North along the coast. Passing through Nasik, Bombay, Surat, Kathiawar, etc., he visited Dwarka and Som Nath. After touring Saurashtra and Sind he entered Punjab. At Uch Sharif, he had religious discussion with Pir Ahmad Hassan Jalal Din. The Pir was very much impressed by the Guru and requested him to stay there for a few more days. In 1515 A. D. Guru Nanak returned to Talwandi, his birth place. The people rushed to see him and everywhere he let the people have copious draught of the nectar of divine Kirtan. He visited his disciple sister at Sultanpur and then joined his family at Kartarpur.

Fourth Travel

(Tours through North)

The indefatigable apostle of love and peace, after spending a short while with his family at Kartarpur again set out in 1516 A.D. Mardana was left behind to sing to the seekers of peace, the praises of the Creator and sustainer. The Guru had with him two companions—Hassa a black-smith and Sihan, a calico printer. Passing through Jaminu and Kashmir, he reached Martand springs near Mattan. In this part of Kashmir lived two famous and learned persons—Pandit Brahm Dass and Sheikh Kamal Din. Kamal Din one day met the Guru and was greatly impressed

after they had the religious discussions. He talked to Pandit Brahm Dass and advised him to see the stranger. Pandit Brahm Dass came to see the Guru and entered into religious discussions. The Pandit asked the Guru as to why, he being a saintly person, was wearing leather jacket. The Guru replied that he had never claimed to be a saint. Secondly, the dress was a matter of choice. The dress which he liked might look ridiculous to the Pandit. Everyone might not feel happy under the same circumstances. What was good for one might not necessarily be good for another, just as :

नानक सावण जे वसै चहुँ उमाहा होइ ।
 नागां मिरगां मछीआ रसीआ घर धनु होइ ।
 नानक सावण जे वसै चहुँ बेछोड़ा होइ ।
 गायी पुता निरधना पन्धी चाकर होइ ।

(वार मलार म. १)

“Nanak, when it rains the four beings—snakes, deer, fishes and wealthy indulgers—are happy but other four beings—calves, poors, travellers and slaves—are unhappy due to separation.”

(Guru Nanak in *Var Malar*)

Brahm Dass then asked the Guru about the latter's views about the origin of the world. The Guru replied :

अरबद नरबद धुन्धूकारा । धरण न गगना हुक्म अपारा ।
 ना दिन रैन न चन्द न सूरज सुन्न समाध लगाइदा ।
 खाणी न बाणी पउण न पाणी । ओपत खपत न आवण जाणी ।
 खण्ड पाताल सपत नहीं सागर नदी न नीर बहाइदा ।
 ब्रह्मा बिसन महेस न कोई । अवर न दीसै एको सोई ।
 नारि पुरख नहीं जाति न जन्मा न को दुख सुख पाइदा ।
 जप तप संजम न ब्रत पूजा । ना को आख बखाण दूजा ।
 आपे आप उपाइ बिगर्स आपे कीमत पाइदा ।
 वेद कतेव न सिमृति सासत । पाठ पुराण उदै नहीं आसत ।
 कहता बकता आप अगोचर आपे अलख लखाइदा ।
 जा तिस भाणा ता जगत उपाइया । बाझ कला आडाण रहाइया ।
 ब्रह्मा बिसनु महेस उपाए, माया मोह बधाइदा ।
 बिरले को गुरु सबद सुनाया । कर कर देखे हुक्म सबाइया ।
 खण्ड ब्राह्मण्ड पाताल आरम्भे, गुप्तो प्रगटी आइदा ।

(मारु महला १)

"For millions of ages there was all darkness over the void. There was no earth or sky and only the will of the Lord prevailed. There was neither night nor day, nor sun nor moon. God was centred in Himself. There were no sources of creation, air, water, birth, death, regions, under worlds, oceans, rivers, streams, etc. . . . The trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva was not there. There was none else but the Absolute One. There was neither man nor woman, caste, pleasure or pain. . . . There was none to practise austerities, contemplation, self-control or fasting. There was none other and the Lord Himself had things in mind and was happy to prize His own glory. . . . There were no Vedas, Somatic religious books, Simrities, Shastras or Puranas, no sun-rise or sun-set. The Lord was centred in His Ownself and unperceived. When He willed, He brought the Universe into being and without any visible power controlled everything. He created Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva and instilled the love of Maya in men. His Will prevailed and He saw it working. Thus He created all Universe and its parts. From His Absolute self, He became Manifest."

(Guru Nanak in *Maru*)

The Pandit asked the Guru about his conception of God and how He could be realised. The Guru replied that for him, the God was Truth, Limitless, Formless and Supreme who could be realised by worshipping Him and through service to humanity. The God, he said, was Absolute (*Nirgun*) as well as Personal (*Sargun*).

Guru Nanak told the learned Pandit that mere knowledge attained from the books did not bear any fruits but was likely to generate the sense of vanity in a person. "Knowledge without experience," he said, "is like a cobweb in which learned people often get entangled. The correct use of the knowledge is that it should be employed in the service of humanity and not in the service of personal vanity."

In reply to another question as to how to attain peace the Guru replied that everybody high or low was unhappy. The only source of peace was the recitation of the Lord's Name.

सहंसर दान दे इन्द्र रोआया । परसराम रोवै घर आया ।
अजय सो रोवै भीखिया खाइ । ऐसी दरगह मिलै सजाइ ।

रोवै राम निकाला भया । सीता लछमण विछड़ गया ।
 रोवै दहसिर लंक गवाइ । जिन सीता आंदी डउरु वाइ ।
 रोवै पांडव भए मजूर । जिनके स्वामी रहत हदूर ।
 रोवै जन्मेजा खोये गया । एकी कारण पापी भया ।
 रोवै सेख मुसाइक पीर । अन्त काल मत लागै भीड़ ।
 रोवै राजे कन पड़ाइ । घर घर माँगे भीखिया जाइ ।
 रोवै किरपण संचय धन जाइ । पंडित रोवै ज्ञान गवाइ ।
 बाली रोवै नाहि भतार । नानक दुखिया सब संसार ।
 मने नाउ सोई जिण जाइ । अउरी करम न लेखै लाइ ।

(वार रामकली म. १)

"Gautam's curse put Indra to grief. Paras Ram, after being defeated by Rama, came to grief. Aja, because of his own actions came to grief. Similarly, Rama because of separation from Sita and Laxman, Ravana because he took away Sita with deceit, the Pandavas because they lost their kingdom, Janmeja due to only one error in life, Saints and holy men, all came to grief at one or the other time. Miser cries at the loss of his wealth. Pandit wails at the loss of wisdom. Nanak, the whole world is unhappy. The only way to happiness is belief in the True Name."

(Guru Nanak in *Var Ram Kali*)

Pandit Brahm Dass was very happy and became disciple of Guru Nanak. He was commissioned to spread Nam Yoga in that part of the country.

Guru Nanak climbed further up and after traversing the difficult and snowy terrain reached Mount Sumer where a sect of Sidh Yogis lived. The yogis believed that the world was a snare and a place of suffering and it was good to remain indifferent to it. These yogis were engaged in the pursuit of acquiring supernatural powers. On meeting the Guru, they asked him as to how he could manage to reach such a difficult place. The Guru replied that the urge to spread the gospel of True Name had brought him there.

There had been a lengthy discourse between the Sidhs and the Guru, a resume of which is found in Granth Sahib. It is difficult to deal with the entire subject here, and only a few questions by the Yogis and their answers by the Guru are given. Bhai Gurdas also gives us a brief but vivid sketch of these

discussions. I shall first narrate the version of Bhai Gurdas. Bhai Gurdas in his first *Var* writes :

फिर पुछण सिद्ध नानका, मात लोक बिच क्या वरतारा ।

"The yogis enquired from (Guru) Nanak of state of affairs prevailing in the mother country."

The Guru replied :

बाबे कहिया नाथ जी, सच चन्द्रमा कूड़ अन्धारा ।

कूड़ अमावस वरतेया, हुड भालण चढ़या संसारा ।

पाप गिरासी पृथमी, धडल खड़ा धर हेठ पुकारा ।

सिद्ध छप बैठे परबती, कौण जगत को पार उतारा ।

जोगी ज्ञान बिहूणिया, निस दिन अग लगान छारा ।

बाझ गुरू डुबा संसारा ।

"Baba replied that falsehood had completely enveloped the truth. Sin is the master and righteousness cries in vain for help. The Sidhs like you who should have saved the world had run away from their duty and had taken refuge in the mountains. The yogis had become devoid of wisdom and went about with ashes smeared on their bodies. The world, without a true leader, is in complete confusion."

Guru Nanak's own words may also be given—

कल काती राजे कासाई धर्म पंख कर उडरिया ।

कूड़ अमावस सच्च चन्द्रमा दीसै नाहि कह चढ़या ।

हुड भाल विकुनी होई अंधेरे राह न कोई, बिच होमै कर दुख रोई ।

"The dark age is like a knife, kings are butchers, and justice and righteousness has vanished away. The dark night of falsehood has completely engulfed the moon of Truth."

(Guru Nanak in *Var Manjh*)

Here are some of the few questions and answers which passed between the Sidhs and the Guru :

प्र०— कवन तुमे, क्या नाउ तुमारा, कउण मारग कउण सुआउ ।

Q.— "What is thy name, religion and mission ?"

उ०— साच कहउं अरदास हमारी, हुउं संत जना बल जाउं ।

A.— "I am servant of the men of God who have taught me the path of true living."

प्र०— कह बैसो कह रहिये बाले, कह आवो कह जाहो ।

नातक बोले सुन बैरागी, क्या तुमारा राहो ।

Q.— “Which is thy native place ? Where hast thou come from and where art thou going ? What is your religion ?”

उ०— घट घट बैस निरन्तर रहिये, चालै सतगुरु भाए ।

सहजे आए हुक्म सिधाए नानक सदा रजाए ।

आसण बैसण थिर नाराइन ऐसी गुरुमत पाए ।

गुरुमुखि बूझै आप पछाणे सचे सच समाए ।

A.— “My place is at the feet of the Lord and I move in accordance of His Will. I have been given the lesson to worship Him. A truly God conscious person always remains merged in the True One.”

प्र०— दुनीआ सागर दुत्तर कह्ये, किउं करि पाइये पारो ।

चरपट बोलै अउधू नानक, देहु सच्चा बीचारो ।

Q.— “Yogi Charpat asked O’ Nanak, tell us how to cross this impassable ocean of the world ?”

उ०— जैसे जल महि कमलु निरालमु, मुरगाई नैसाणे ।

मुरति सबदि भव सागर तरीये, नानक नाम बखाणे ।

A.— “As the lotus or the duck stays in the water and still remains detached, similarly to cross the ocean of the world one has to remain detached from the world while living in it and doing one’s normal duties.”

प्र०— सुण स्वामी अरदास हमारी, पूछहु साच बीचारो ।

रोस न कीजै, उत्तर दीजै, किउं पाइये गुरद्वारो ।

Q.— “Now tell us how to attain the threshold of the Master ?”

उ०— इह मनु चलतउ सच घर बैसे, नानक नाम अधारो ।

आपे मेल मिलावै करता, लागै सच्च पिआरो ।

A.— “By constantly meditating on Him, the True One Himself guides a person to merge in Him.”

प्र०— कवन सु आवै, कवन सु जावै ।

कवन सु त्रिभवन रहिआ समावै ।

Q.— “Who does not get rid of coming and going ? Who merges in All-pervading Lord ?”

उ०— मनमुख बिनसै, आवै जाइ ।

नानक गुरुमुख सच समाइ ।

A.— “The egocentric is never saved from being born again and again. The God conscious one merges with Him.”

प्र०— किस कारण गृह तजिओ उदासी ।
 किस कारण इह भेख निवासी ।
 किस वखर के तुम वणजारे ।
 किउं करि साधु लंघावै पारे ।

Q.— “Why hast thou left home, become a recluse and put on the garb of a mendicant? What is thy object of pursuit and how wilt thou lead others?”

उ०— गुरमुख खोजत भए उदासी ।
 दरसन के तई भेख निवासी ।
 साचु वखर के हम वणजारे ।
 नानक गुरमुख उत्तरस पारे ।

A.— “I have become recluse and have put on this dress to discover God-conscious persons. I am seeker of Truth because only those who lead a truthful life can guide the others.”

The yogis asked him a lot of questions on the origin of the universe, about God and other spiritual subjects. They were astonished to hear the mature arguments of the youngman. They then tried to make the Guru believe that their way of life was superior. The yogi said ;

हाटी बाटी रहहि निराले, रुख बिरुख उदिआने ।
 कंद मूल आहारो खाइऐ, अउधू बोले गिआने ।
 तीरथ न्हाइऐ, सुख फल पाइऐ, मैल न लागै काई ।
 गोरख पूत लोहारीपा बोलै, जोग जुगत बिधि साई ।

“Away from the society, we live in jungles and eat only roots and fruits. This is the correct way of life. We bathe in holy places and attain peace without defiling the mind. This is true yoga, says Loharipa.”

The Guru replied :

हाटी बाटी नींद न आवै, पर घर चित्त न डोलाई ।
 बिन नावै मन टेक न टिकई, नानक भुख न जाई ।

“One should always remain alive to one's duties towards society and should not falter to see other's wealth and beauty. Where-ever one may be the mind could only be controlled by the recitation of His Name.”

Guru Nanak then gave description of true yoga :

दरसन भेख करहु जोगिन्द्रा, मुद्रा झोली खिथा ।
 बारह अंतर एक सरेवहु, खट दरसन इक पंथा ।
 इन विधि मन समझाइऐ पुरखा, बाहुड़ चोट न खाइऐ ।
 नानक बोलै गुरमुख वृक्षै, जोग जुगति इव पाइऐ ।
 अन्तर सबद निरन्तर मुद्रा, हउमै समता दूर करी ।
 काम क्रोध अहंकार निवारै, गुर के सबद सु समझ परी ।
 खिथा झोली भर पुर रहिआ, नानक तारै एक हरी ।
 सच्चा साहिब साची नाई, परखै गुर की बात खरी ।

ऊँधउ खपर, पंच भू टोपी ।

काइया कड़ासन, मन जागोटी ।

सत संतोख, सजम है नाल ।

नानक गुरमुख नाम समाल ।

"Let God's vision be thy coat, ring and wallet, worship of the Absolute One as thy aim of life, and true path as wisdom of the books. With such a wisdom thou wilt not suffer again because this is the way to true yoga. Let the true word be thy ear-rings and through this dispel ego, wrath, lust and pride. Let the knowledge (that the Lord is A'l Pervading) be thy coat and wallet and be saved by the Lord. True is He and His Name. Let the detachment be thy begging bowl, essence of five elements be thy cap, intelligence be thy mat, control on mind be thy loin-cloth and truth, contentment and continence be thy companions. Thus, sayeth Nanak thou wilt live on His Name."

The Guru reprimanded the yogis for running away from their duties in the world. The knowledge acquired by them he said, should be employed for the spiritual and social uplift of the humanity. They should discard the idle pursuits of acquiring super-natural powers, live in the world like a house-holder and serve the humanity.

During the lengthy discourse Guru Nanak convinced the yogis that they should not leave the world and should do their duty towards the mankind. In the cave-temples on the Mansarover lake the images of Guru Nanak also are being worshipped by the monks.

The Guru then moved further and after passing through Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan and Tibet he entered China and went as

far as Nanking. Unfortunately much is not known about his visits in these parts of the world. Before the hostilities between India and China started, many pilgrims from China and Tibet used to come to Amritsar and worship at the Golden Temple which they called as Wahguru's temple.

Guru Nanak then retraced his steps and returned to Punjab where for sometime he stayed with his family.

Fifth Travel (Tours through Arab land)

In 1518 the minstrel of God attended by the devout and faithful Mardana set out for his tour of Western countries. He was by then 49 years of age. He wore the dress of Muslim Haji and had under his arm the collection of his own hymns. After passing through Sind and Gujarat, he took a ship from Surat and landed at Arabian Coast. Traversing the desert country, he reached Mecca, the holiest place of Mohammedans. At night Guru Nanak slept with his feet towards Ka'aba. In the Islamic practice it is forbidden to stretch one's feet towards the Ka'aba. When the people saw him, they were enraged and an Indian Muslim Jiwan rebuked the Guru and asked him as to why he was sleeping with his feet towards the house of God. "Turn my feet," the Guru said with all humility, "in the direction where God does not exist." In rage Jiwan kicked the Guru and dragged him by turning his feet to the other direction. Wisdom dawned upon him. God was present everywhere. He felt ashamed and repented on his action.

Many muslims from India, amongst them Pir Rukan Din of Uch, the Guru's old friends Sheikhs Brahm and Kamal Din, came to see him. Rukan Din asked the Guru as to what religion he belonged to. The Guru said that he was servant of God and his religion was love and service to humanity. In reply to a second question as to who of the two was better—Hindu or a Muslim—the Guru replied, that it was not the label of religion but his deeds which made a man good or bad. There is no difference between Hindus and Muslims. They are the creation of the same Creator. Unfortunately both Hindus and Muslims depicted Rama the God of Hindus and Allah the God of Muslims, as irreconcilable foes. Men could become good Hindus or good Muslims, only if they

followed their religion properly. Qazi Rukan Din was greatly impressed by the arguments advanced by the Guru and requested him to stay at Mecca for a few more days. After a few days Guru Nanak expressed his desire to move further up. Qazi Rukan Din requested for souvenir and received Guru's sandals (Kharawn) which he brought back to India and are kept as sacred relics at the Shrine of Uch, now in Pakistan, and are exhibited to public on special occasions.

From Mecca, the Guru went to Madina, Egypt and other places in Africa. In Sudan there is a monument known as Nanak Wali, in commemoration of his visit. The Guru then went to Turkey. In *History of Punjab*, Syed Mohammad Lateef writes, "A story is related of (Guru) Nanak's visit to Stamboul and his interview with the Sultan of Turkey who was noted for his cupidity and extreme oppression of his subjects. Nanak's admonitions had a great effect on the Sultan who is said to have bestowed his hoarded treasures on the saqirs and needy and to have discontinued his tyranny over his people."

From Turkey the Guru went to Baghdad the highest seat of learning in the Muslim world. In the early hours of the morning, to the musical notes of Mardana's rebeck, the Guru started singing the praises of the Master of Universe. In Islamic law music is prohibited because it is said that it excites passions. Many residents of Baghdad attracted by the divine music stood there in silence. Some invisible chords in the innermost depths of their hearts seemed to have been vibrating and under the influence of its spell they forgot the law banning music.

The music stopped and the minstrel of God shouted the Azan (call for prayer). In melodious voice he called out the praises of Lord but deleted the name of the prophet of Islam.

In the heart of the Muslim empire and the highest seat of Muslim culture, the use of music, the deletion of the name of prophet from Azan and the mention of millions of nether and upper regions (defining the limitlessness of God) instead of seven nether and upper regions as described in Islamic scriptures, were crimes which warranted death penalty. The religious head after hearing all this gave *Fatwa* (religious order) that the stranger who had committed the offence should be stoned to death. The zealous faithfuls with stones in hands, advanced towards the Guru.

Seeing them coming the heavenly musician lifted his charm and sweet voice, started to sing the most thought-provoking hymns of the Lord of Universe so melodiously that the crowd stopped in mute adoration as if stunned by magic, to listen and felt the thrilling and penetrating notes of divine music. The religious chief was scandalized to hear that the stranger had not been stoned. He, therefore, himself came to see the man who had kept his men spell-bound. On meeting the Guru the following conversation passed between them :

The Pir —What religion do you belong to?

The Guru—I have faith in the religion of God.

The Pir —Why do you use music? Don't you know that it is the means of amusement for indulgers."

The Guru—Music has a powerful influence upon human heart and soul. When used to sing the Master's praises, it leaves a lasting impression on the soul. You seem to have not cared to study this aspect of music.

The Pir —In AZAN why did you not use the name of the prophet who is last of all?

The Guru—I worship only one God and do not join any one else with him. The absolute monotheism preached by Islam also says so. In fact I put into practice this monotheism more than you do.

The Pir —We know there are seven upper regions. How do you say there are millions over millions?

The Guru—By declaring that there are only seven upper regions, you place a limit on the powers of the Supreme Lord. None has been and none shall ever be capable of knowing the limits of the Limitless One. He has created countless numbers, worlds and systems.

The Pir —How you define God?

The Guru—It is impossible to describe Him accurately. He is the Supreme Spirit that pervades and transcends the Universe.

The Pir and other religious men were very much satisfied and felt happy. They requested the Guru to stay with them for some time. At the place this discourse took place, the Muslim devotees and admirers built a platform in commemoration of the visit of

Hindu Pir Baba Nanak Aulia. The platform is still there and a couple of muslim attendants look after it. The following inscription—as translated in English—appears on the platform :

“In the memory of the Guru, the divine master Baba Nanak Faqir Aulia, this building has been raised with the help of seven saints. The blessed disciple has produced a spring of grace.”

The date of the erection of the building is given as 927 Hijri which corresponds to 1520 A. D. Swami Anandacharya in his book *The Snow Birds* has written that during his tours of Arab countries he found in Baghdad an inscription on the wall of the shrine of a great muslim saint Bahlol Dana. The English translation of the inscription is :

“Here spake the Hindu Guru Nanak to Faqir Bahlol and for these sixty winters since the Guru left Iran, the soul of Bahlol has rested on the Master’s word like a bee poised on a dawn-lit honey rose.”

After staying for about four months in Baghdad the Guru took leave of the admirers and friends who presented to him, as a token of their respect and reverence, a robe of honour. On this robe, which is preserved at Dehra Baba Nanak in Punjab, are written some verses in Arabic.

After leaving Baghdad Guru Nanak passed through different places and entered Afghanistan. Two Sikh temples one in Kabul and the other at Askara water springs—built in his memory still exist. In early 1521 A. D. Guru Nanak crossed Attock and entered Punjab. He stayed for some time at Hassan Abdal where he met Pir Wali Qandhari—an occultist—who had kept the people around under awe. During discussions, the Guru humbled his pride and advised him to serve and not curse the people. To this day the imprint of the hand of Guru Nanak, reminding us of the victory of Truth and humility over ego and pride, (purporting the ideals of *Satyamev-Jayayte*) exists on a rock. Here the devotees built a Gurdwara which perhaps had all along been the best managed of all the Sikh shrines. This place is now in Pakistan and is known as Panja Sahib (The Holy Hand Imprint).

After leaving Hassan Abdal, the Guru marched through the western Punjab and reached Saidpur and stayed with Bhai Lalle

his devoted disciple. Here about 20 years in advance Guru Nanak had foretold the great misery the people would undergo at the hands of Babar and invader. The event took place during his stay at Saidpur. A reckless fight between the Pathan rulers and Moghul invaders took place. The Pathans could not withstand the onslaught of Babar's trained soldiery and artillery. The Pathans with the native allies were defeated. Intoxicated with victory and wine, the Babar's soldiers let loose a reign of rape and rapine without discriminating between the vanquished Hindus and Muslims. Thousands were put to sword and countless including the Guru and Mardana were taken as prisoners. Guru Nanak was given some load to carry and Mardana was ordered to act as a groom for the horse of a General Mir Khan. While moving with the prisoners, the tender heart of the man of God felt an unbearable weight of the suffering of helpless men and women. He saw the men with haggard faces. He saw the women with torn clothes and shaven heads. What a misery! What a pathetic state of affairs! Silently and helplessly the Indian—men and women—were performing all sorts of menial and ignominious duties allotted to them. In this silence rose a sweet voice which poured out the heart of the minstrel of the Lord of Universe—

जिन्ह सिरि सोहनि पटीआं, मांगीं पाइ संधूर ।

से सिर काती मुन्नीअन, गल बिचि आवै धूड़ि ।

महलाँ अंदर होंदीआँ, हुणि बहणि न मिलनि हदूरि ।

आदेसु बाबा आदेसु ।

आदि पुरख तेरा अंतु न पाइआ, करि करि देखहि वेस ।

जदहु सीआ बीआहीआँ, लाड़े सोहनि पास ।

हिडोली चढ़ि आईआँ, दद खंड कीते रास ।

उपरहु पाणी वारीऐ, झले शिमकनि पास ।

इकु लखु लहन्हि बहिठीआँ, लखु लहन्हि खड़ीआँ ।

गरी छुहारे : खांदीआँ, माणन्हि सेजड़ीआँ ।

तिन्ह गलि सिलका पाईआँ, दुटन्ह मोत सरीआँ ।

धनु जोबन दुइ बैरी होए, जिन्ही रखे रंगु लाइ ।

दूता नो फुरमाइआ, लै चलै पत्त गवाइ ।

साहाँ सुरति गवाईआ, रंगि तमासै चाइ ।

बाबर वाणी फिर गई, कुइरु न रोटी खाइ ।

इकना बखत खुआईअहि, इकन्हा पूजा जाइ ।
 चउके विणु हिंदवाणीआं, किउं टिके कढ़हि नाइ ।
 राम न कबहूँ चेतिओ, हुणि कहणि न मिलै खुदाइ ।
 इक घर आवहि आपणै, इक मिल मिल पुछहि सुख ।
 इकना एहो लिखिआ, बहि बहि रोवहि दुख ।
 जो तिसु भावै सो थीऐ, नानक क्या मानुख ।

(आसा म. १)

"The ladies with beautiful hair-do and with vermilion in partings are now walking helplessly with their heads shaven and the dust is suffocating their throats. Those who enjoyed in palaces have now no place to sit even. Hail to thee O Lord ! It is not possible for me to gauge the depth of Thy changing scenes so often. At the time of marriage these maidens looked so beautiful in the company of their spouses. They were carried on palanquins wearing ivory bangles and with perfume sprinkled. Many ceremonies were performed when they entered their new houses. But alas to-day they have chains instead of necklaces around their necks and both riches and beauty have proved to be their enemies. The Moghuls have driven them with disgrace.....The rulers have forgotten their duties and are indulging in revelries. During this writ of Babar even the princes don't have anything to eat. Hindus and Muslims have forgotten their prayers. Hindu women cannot draw cooking squares nor they can apply *tilak*. Those who never uttered the name of Rama are not spared even if they offered to utter the name of Allah. Everyone is anxious to know about the welfare of his dear ones and many will pass their lives in anguish. O Nanak, the will of God has come to pass—Man is helpless."

(Guru Nanak in *Asa*)

The prisoners got so much absorbed in the divine music that they forgot their sufferings. It raised their moral strength. General Mir Khan who happened to have heard the music had seen the gradual change that was taking place in the woe-laden hearts of the captives. He found the strange influence of the divine music on the minds of prisoners and reported the matter to Babar.

The prisoners had by then reached the camp and were allotted duties. Guru Nanak saw his unfortunate countrymen doing all sorts of hard labour. And as if to buck them up he again sang to the penetrating notes of Mardana's rebeck :

मुल खरीदी लाला गोला, मेरा नाम सभागा ।

गुर की वचनी हाटि बिकाना, जितु लाइआ तितु लाग ।

तेरे लाले किया चतुराई ।

साहिब का हुकमु, न करना जाई ।

(मार्क म. १)

"O Lord of the Universe, I, the fortunate one, am Thy humble slave. I do everything at Thy bidding. How can Thy slave be clever when he is unable to carry out Thy Commands."

(Guru Nanak in *Marin*)

Babar attended by Mir Khan arrived in the camp. He heard the heavenly music from the man of God who had a strange glory on his countenance. He also witnessed the soothing and cooling effect of the music on the minds of the miserable people. They looked like unmindful of their sufferings. The sleeping conscience of Babar was shaken and he approached the Guru, and had a hearty talk with him. Guru Nanak told Babar about his duties as a follower of the Prophet and as a King. "As a Muslim," the Guru said, "you should believe in Brotherhood of man and should treat people of all religious denominations alike. These are teachings of your religion and Prophet. As a King you should always have the good of all the subjects at heart, irrespective of their religion. All of your actions should aim at the welfare of your subjects. God will not forgive you for the acts of cruelty which you are showing to the vanquished people. Like brave men your armies should fight with the armies of your adversaries. What bravery is in disgracing the civil and defenceless population. You are neither acting like a true Muslim nor as a good and ideal ruler."

Babar was overwhelmed and released all the captives and restored their properties.

We may here quote what G. A. Natesan writes in his publication, *Ramanand to Ram Tiruth* :

"Needless to say Babar did value and follow all this in his future life. But for those who have read of Babar's

power and formidableness, the patriotic part played by the Guru does not stand in need of comments. He met the most terrible man on earth, a wink of whose brow was a sufficient order for putting millions to the sword and by his able intercession turned him into the kindest ruler. This was the service that the Guru rendered to his country and countrymen."

For some time, Guru Nanak stayed at Saidpur later known as Eminabad. His *kirtan* gave a soothing touch to the suffering humanity. People soon considered their miseries as the things of the past and settled down to their normal lives. The Guru then returned to Kartarpur.

CHAPTER IV

THE LAST DAYS

As has been stated earlier, Guru Nanak spent about 23 years in travelling through different parts of the world when he visited almost every place of note belonging to the major religions of the world. During this period he met many scholars and saints and exchanged thoughts with them. Wherever he went he advised the people to live a life of purity and love. To spread the message of love and peace he did not care for the hardships he had to undergo while travelling through thick forests infested with wild life and snowy mountains, through parched lands and deserts. All this time he had been preaching.

In 1522 A. D. he settled down at Kartarpur to give practical demonstration to the people as to how day to day life under the soothing influence of religion brings harmony, happiness and contentment. He laid the foundation of a society in which people of different faiths and social strata lived together like brothers and on a cooperative basis enjoyed the fruits of their labour. The Guru himself discharged all the duties—spiritual and social—in an admirable manner. As the religious head, he sat on the gaddi to teach the people the basic principles of religion. His divine *kirtan* filled the hearts of the people with virtue and erased from their minds sinful and base thoughts. He worked in the fields as a farmer to show to the people that those who call themselves religious people should not live on the earnings of other people but should do honest labour to earn their livelihood. He worked in the community kitchen to inculcate the spirit of love and service, in the mind of his followers. "In addition to sowing wheat...for the physical nourishment of his fellowmen, this old father of his people also sowed the seeds of NAME...in the hearts and souls of all...His wife joyfully cooperated with him in this labour of love for their world-wide family."*

After spending about eight years at Kartarpur, Guru Nanak went to Achal Batala where lot of Yogis used to assemble on

* Prof. Kartar Singh—*Life of Guru Nanak*

Shivaratri fair. During his long discussions with the head of the Yogis named Bharthari, he advised him to shed the habit of running away from the social duties. The Yogis, he said, instead of being burden on the house-holders, should work for the uplift of society. When Bharthari offered the Guru an intoxicant which the Yogi believed helped in concentration, the Guru said :

गुड़ करि गिआनु धिआनु करि धावै, करि करणी कसु पाइऐ ।
भाठी भवनु प्रेम का पोचा, इनु रसि अमिउ चुआईऐ ।
बाबा मनु मतवारो नाम रसु पीवै, सहज रंग रचि रहिआ ।
अहिनिसि बनी प्रेम लिव लागी, सबदु अनाहद गहिआ ।

(आसा म. १)

“Let the Divine knowledge be molasses, concentration on Name be the Mawha, etc., and faith the distilling pot plastered with love. The wine distilled in this way, when taken, gives to the mind the colour of equipoise.”

(Guru Nanak in *Asa*)

The Guru gave to Bharthari the characteristics of a true Yogi. He said :

गुर का सबदु मनै महि मुद्रा, खिया खिमा हंडावउ ।
जो किछु करै भला करि मानउ, सहज जोग निधि पावउ ।
बाबा जुगता जीउ जुगह जुग, जोगी परम तंत महि जोग ।
अमृत नाम निरंजन पाइआ, गिआन काइआ रस भोग ।

(आसा म. १)

“True word is my ear-ring and compassion is my coat. My treasure is Sehj Yoga attained through lovingly submitting to His Will. O brother, he who meditates on Him is true Yogi and enjoys the Eternal Bliss. Divine Knowledge is my Yogis paraphernalia. To be in His presence is the ashes which I apply to my body. My way of life is to Sing His praises. I see His light in every part of his creation. Listen O yogi Bharthari, Nanak says, that true Yogi is he who is always attuned to the Supreme Being.

(Guru Nanak in *Asa*)

The Yogis were very much impressed and bowed before the Guru.

Guru Nanak then went to Multan and visited the shrines of Bhagat Prehlad and Shams Tabrez, a muslim saint. He met

many Faqirs and saints and in about 1531 A. D. returned to Kartarpur where he resumed the work of founding the Society which believed in Fatherhood of God and Brotherhood of man. During about sixteen years which he spent at Kartarpur, Guru Nanak demonstrated to the world the "wholesome combination of action and devotion, a complete reconciliation between asceticism and the house-holder's life." Here he showed to the people the way to satisfy the physical as well spiritual hunger. In the community kitchen to which all contributed willingly, the people of different faiths, social strata and age sat and ate together. Thus this happy colony was a model of "brotherhood of God-fearing republicans."

In this happy colony, the life-long companion of the Guru, Bhai Mardana breathed his last. In this happy colony again a historical meeting between Guru Nanak and his would-be successor took place.

In the village named Khadur, there lived a rich Khattri, a God-fearing but born leader of men. His name was Lehna which means debt. He was very pious man and used to lead, every year, the congregation to worship the goddess at Jawalamukhi. In 1533 A. D., while on his way to Jawalamukhi with his followers he stopped at Kartarpur and went to see Guru Nanak. When the two kindred spirits came face to face, Guru Nanak asked, "What is your name?"

"My name is Lehna," the other replied.

The Guru smiled and said, "At last, brother, you have come to receive your *Lehna* (debt)."

No one at that moment realised the inner meanings of the casual remark of the Guru. The Guru only knew that the stranger was in fact his successor.

Bhai Lehna saw with his own eyes the harmonious atmosphere at Kartarpur and decided to live there and work like others for the great task which Guru Nanak had undertaken. He worked hard in fields, and all his silken clothes became mud-stained. Unmindful of all this, Bhai Lehna, in the evening returned to the village with a heavy load of fodder on his head. Mata Sulakhani, Guru Nanak's wife, said to the Guru, "This young and delicate boy is working very hard. What a heavy load he is bringing on

his head." The Guru smiled and said "Good lady, this head has to bear the load of the suffering humanity."

For years Baba Lehna served the people at Kartarpur with perfect faith and love and had won the hearts of the people. The labour of love, at last, bore fruits and Bhai Lehna was given, by Guru Nanak, the name of Angad. The word Angad means "part of the body."

And one day a message from Pir Baha-ud-Din of Multan came. It said, "I am leaving and you won't be there. The thought is torturing me." The Guru was visibly moved and replied back, "Go ahead my friend. I shall follow you in about six weeks."

On 14th June, 1539 the Guru announced to his followers that the day of his departure from the world was approaching. He got up from his seat and walked to the place where Bhai Lehna was sitting. He placed five paise in front of Bhai Lehna and bowed to his successor. Baba Buddha anointed the new Guru with a saffron mark on his forehead. "Thus," writes Professor Kartar Singh, "the spirit which Guru Nanak had got from God entered the heart and soul of Guru Angad. Thus, Guru Nanak paid unto Bhai Lehna 'the *Lehna*' (debt)."

Guru Nanak is said to be the first religious leader who appointed his successor during his life time. A devout Sikh, Bhai Lehna, thus became Guru Angad, and Guru Nanak became a devout Sikh. What better example of democracy or socialism could be found than this?

On 7th September, 1539 A. D. the old father of his followers sat on a bed in perfect calm. The Sikhs—both Hindus and Muslims—were sitting calmly, to watch the departure of the Bride towards house of her Spouse. The old father then sang :

जै घरि कीरति आखीऐ, करते का होइ बीचारो ।
 तितु घरि गावहु सोहिला, सिवरहु सिरजण हारो ।
 तुम गावहु मेरे निरभउ का सोहिला ।
 हउं वारी जाउँ जितु सोहिलै सदा सुख होइ ।
 नित नित जीअड़े समालीअनि, देखैगा देवणहार ।
 तेरे दानै कीमति ना पावै, तिसु दाते कबण सुमार ।
 संवत साहा लिखिआ, मिलि करि पावहु तेल ।
 देहु सज्जन असीसड़ीआ, जिउं होवै साहिब सिउं मेल ।

ਬਰਿ ਬਰਿ एहो पाहुँचा, सदडे नित पवन्हि ।

सदणहारा मिमरीये, नानक से दिह आवन्हि ।

(गउड़ी दोषकी म. १)

"Wherever the Creator is dwelling, meditate on Him and sing His praises. Sing the praises of the Fearless One. I am a sacrifice unto Him who protects every one. Neither His gifts nor He Himself can be evaluated. The appointed time for the departure (death) of Bride has come. Come, friends, pray that the Bride (Guru Nanak) may meet the Spouse (God). This message (of death) has to come in each home (one or other day). Forget not Him whose message this is. And this day has to come for every one of us."

(Guru Nanak in *Gauri*)

Guru Nanak closed his eyes and passed away in the act of devotion. He was over 70 years old then. Great was the grief amongst the people. The mortal remains of the apostle of love were covered with white sheet. Both Hindus and Muslims claimed him as their teacher. All extant biographies of Guru Nanak record that there was dispute between the members of both communities about the disposal of his earthly remains. The Muslims wanted to bury and the Hindus wanted to cremate it. It is said that the flowers placed at the body of the Guru were equally distributed between the two communities to dispose them as they liked. Many biographers tell us that when the sheet was lifted the body of the Guru was not there. In commemoration of their loving teacher at Kartarpur, on the bank of the river Ravi, Hindus built a Dharamsala and Muslims built a tomb. Both of them have since been washed away as if by the order of providence so that people may not start worshipping him.

Though the mortal remains of this illustrious son of the land dissolved into its constituents, the spirit passed on to his successor. Guru Nanak left the people far better than he had found them. "Their belief" writes Dr. G. C. Narang, "had been ennobled, their worship purified, the rigidity of caste considerably relaxed, their minds greatly emancipated and they were now fit to enter on the career of national progress to which Nanak's successors were destined to lead them." His powerful attacks on casteism, ritualism and formalism introduced by the Hindu and Muslim priestly class

worked very greatly towards the religious emancipation of the masses. His advocacy of one God and of the Fatherhood of God and Brotherhood of man inculcated in the minds of his people the sense of nationalism and socialism. The institutions of congregational worship and community kitchen introduced by him raised the moral structure of the people and gave them a sense of service and humility. His advocacy for equal treatment for women gave a sense of relief to this most miserable section of Indian society.

These factors greatly endeared him amongst the masses. "Though he attacked all parties," writes Dr. Narang, "tore their cherished beliefs to shreds, he became the popular hero because it was soon found that he was destroying which was not genuine but a mere addition or an accretion to their religion..... Here was now, for the first time after ages of dissension and discord, a hero whom every Hindu (and Muslim) could call his own and..... could justly feel proud."

During almost sixty years of his preaching Guru Nanak taught the people dedication, love, service and humility, and left one slogan for the humanity at large:

नानक नाम चहुँदी कला ।

तेरे भाणे सबत दा भला ।

"O' Nanak, may the Name of All Pervading Lord be always in ascendancy and by His grace may peace and tranquillity prevail over the Universe."

CHAPTER V

RELIGION OF GURU NANAK

गल्लौं भिस्त न जाईऐ, छुटे सच्च कमाइ ।

(वार मान म. १)

“It is not mere talk but truthful living which brings emancipation.”

(Guru Nanak in *Var Manjh*)

Guru Nanak based his religion on the following three principles :

1. *Nam japo*.—“Recite the Name of God.”
2. *Kirt Karo*.—“Earn your living by doing honest work.”
3. *Wand chhako*.—“Share your earnings with your less fortunate fellow beings.”

We may now deal with the subject in some detail.

1. Nam Japo

Here the duty of a person to God has been defined. But let us first of all know the Guru's conception of God.

At the time Guru Nanak appeared on the scene, there were two views about God. One view said that God was immanent (*Sargun*). He was present everywhere and in every part of His creation. He was present in man as well as in beast, in elephant as well as in ant, and in good as well as in bad. Good and bad emanated from Him. He was personal and manifest. So everything was divine. In the second case, the God was known as transcendent or absolute (*Nirgun*). He was omnipotent, omniscient, was living far away, was unapproachable and was capable of creating and destroying as He willed. He was unaffected by the prayers of mortals.

In the former case, the presence of God in every part of the creation, makes the creation divine and perfect. It does not leave any chance for improvement and since everything good and bad emanated from Him, where is the chance to condemn bad actions? So, take everything as it is. Such a conception of God makes moral and ethic, which form the basis of a religion, mere meaningless things and makes the life void of adventure, improvement and betterment.

In the second case God is seen as a despot ruler who rules the Universe in an arbitrary way. Nothing can happen without His will and whatever happens is already decided by Him. Knowing that his destiny is fore-ordained, a person loses all interest in it and becomes full of despair and fear. The life becomes stagnant and monotonous. Such a God looks like a dreadful dictator who could be feared and respected but could not be loved and respected.

In a nutshell, immanent God makes any effort for improvement unnecessary, the transcendent God makes all efforts for betterment useless.

In Guru Nanak's conception of God, we find reconciliation of the two views. Guru Nanak tells us that though all good and bad emanate from the immanent God, man has got the intelligence to choose what is good and reject what is bad. Similarly the transcendent God is not aloof or unapproachable, but responds to the prayers of a devotee. Such a God, therefore, should not be feared but loved. In the opening hymn of *Jap Ji*, Guru Nanak describes the God as :

Ik-om-kar :—"God is one—indivisible one."

Guru Nanak has not considered God as the supreme commander of many gods, demi-gods, prophets or gurus. Nor he has considered Him as the head of Creator, Sustainer and Destroyer. He considered God Himself as Creator, Saviour, Sustainer and Destroyer. He has not delegated these powers to anyone.

Sat nam :—"His Name is Truth."

So according to Guru Nanak, God is truth and truth only prevailed, as he gives us in the second stanza of *Jap Ji* :

आदि सचु, जुगादि सचु ।

है भी सचु, नानक होसी भी सचु । (जपुजी)

"The Truth prevailed before the time started and also during the passage of time. Even now the Truth prevails and O' Nanak Truth shall prevail for ever."

If He is Truth, He does not like speaking untruth. To speak untruth therefore, is ungodly. It becomes a religious obligation for those who follow the path shown by Guru Nanak, to speak only truth. This is a code of social behaviour.

Karta Purkh :—"He is the creator."

According to Hindu philosophy given in the *Vedas* and which has been accepted by Guru Nanak, before anything was created in the universe, God lived absolutely in Himself and was *Nirgun* or absolute. Before making Himself manifest in His creation, He took counsel and advice with Himself. He created this universe and was very happy to see it. So to say He loved his own creation. We may quote two hymns of Guru Nanak :

आपीन्है आपु साजिओ, आपीन्है रचिओ नाउ ।

दुयी कुदरति साजीऐ, करि आसणु डिठो चाउ ।

(आसा दी वार म. १)

"God Himself created everything and gave currency to His Name. Assuming His second Nature, (when He became indweller of everything) He marvelled at His own work."

(Guru Nanak in *Asa Di Var*)

Again :

अरबद तरबद ध्रुवकारा ।

घरणि न गगना हुकमु अपारा ।

न दिनु रैनि, न चहु न सूरजु, सुन्न समाधि लगाइंदा ।

खाणी न बाणी, पउण न पाणी ।

ओपति खपति न आवण जाणी ।

खंड पताल सप्त नहीं भागर, नदी न नीरु बहाइंदा ।

ब्रह्मा बिसनु महेसु न कोई ।

अवर न दीसै एको सोई ।

नारि पुरखु नहीं जाति न जनमा, ना को दुख सुख पाइंदा ।

जा तिमु भाणा ता जगनु उपाइआ ।

बाझु कला आडाणु रहाइआ ।

ब्रह्मा बिसनु महेसु उपाए, माइआ मोहु बधाइंदा ।

विरले कउ गुर सवहु मुणाइआ ।

करि करि देखै हुकमु सवाइआ ।

खंड ब्रह्मांड पाताल अरंभे, गुप्तहु परगटी आईंदा ॥

(मारु म. १)

"For thousands of millions of years there prevailed darkness over the void. There was no earth, no sky, no day, no night, no moon, no sun. God was centered in absolute void and was meditating on Himself (in this state He was *Nirgun* or Absolute). There were no sources of creation, no air, no

water, no birth, no death, no regions, no underworlds, no seas, no rivers..... no Brahma, no Vishnu, no Mahesh but the Absolute One. There was no woman, no man, no caste, no birth, no pleasure, no pain.....when it pleased Him, He saw His will working and created the universe and unseen He controlled it. He created the trinity, *i.e.* Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh and instilled in them the love of Maya. In this vast world He rarely created a person who fully understood Master's teaching. His will prevailed and He saw it working when the universe was created. 'The God in this state became manifest (*Sargun*) from His absolute (*Nirgun*) form."

(Guru Nanak in *Rag Maru*)

So God was absolute (*Nirgun*) before He created anything and became manifest (*Sargun*) after He created the universe and became in-dweller in every part of His creation. In one of his hymns Guru Nanak says :

सहस्र तव नैन नन नैन है तोहि कड, सहस्र मूरति नना एक तोही ।

सहस्र पद विमल नन एक पद गंध बिनु, सहस्र तव गंध इव चलत मोही ।

सभ महि जोति जोति है सोइ ।

तिसकै चानणि सभ महि चानणु होइ ।

(धनाश्री स. १)

"Having thousands of eyes Thou art without an eye. Having thousands of forms Thou art formless. Having thousands of stainless feet Thou havest no feet. Having thousands of noses, Thou havest no nose to smell with. All this is so pleasing and charming. Thy Spirit pervadeth everywhere and lighteth everything."

(Guru Nanak in *Rag Dhanasri*)

Nir Bhau, Nir Vair—"He is fearless, He is without hate." God is not afraid of anyone nor He hates anybody, because He is Truth. Anyone, as we know, who lives a life of truthfulness does neither fear nor frightens anyone. He does not hate anyone also. Truthfulness, therefore, is of fundamental importance and rids a person of fear and hate in the same way as the God Almighty whom Guru Nanak refers to as Truth is free of these two vices. Such a person commands respect in the society.

Akal Murat, Ajooni—"He is free of death. He is free of birth." As has been explained before God was not born but

existed before anything else. As He was not born, He is not subject to death.

Sai Bhan—He is self-existent and pervades all the Universe." So the Absolute one has become manifest or personal.

Guru Nanak describes the God as Formless (*Nirakar*) also. Whenever anyone asked him as to what his name was, the Guru always replied that his name was Nanak Nirankari that is Nanak of the Formless One. Here is given the true description of God in Guru Nanak's words. He is called as Truth, absolute, limitless, birthless, formless and satiated, who could be realised through the grace of a teacher :

तू सचा सचिआह जिनि सचु वरताइआ ।	— Truth
बैठा ताड़ी लाइ, कंवलु छपाइआ ।	— Absolute
ब्रह्म बडा कहाइ, अन्त न पाइआ ।	— Limitless
ना तिसु बापु न माइ, किनि तू जाइआ ।	— Birthless
ना तिसु रूप न रेख, बरन सबाइआ ।	— Formless
ना तिसु भुख पिआस, रज्जा धाइआ ।	— Satiated
गुर महि आपु समोइ, सबदु वरताइआ ।	— Could be realized
सचे ही पतीआइ, सचि समाइआ ।	through Guru.
(बार मलार की म. १)	

Guru Nanak's God therefore, is absolute, formless infinite and yet personal.

Gur Parsad—He, the God, could be realised through the teaching of Guru."

In Sikhism, the necessity of the Guru, therefore, is all the more important. It may, however, be mentioned that in Sikh religion the Guru enlightens a person and shows him the path to realisation. He does not promise anyone any intercession with the Almighty to favour his followers but only teaches them their duty towards Him. Everyone, the Sikh Gurus say, will have to answer for his deeds.

करमी आपो आपणी, के नेई के दूरि ।

(जपुजी)

The Sikh Gurus think that man is not divine but is capable of becoming divine if only he gets a guide who himself is perfect and leads a life of honesty and purity. Such a Guru or teacher should not be a supernatural figure but one who is subject to

ordinary laws of nature and who could be imitated by the mortals. It is almost difficult for a person to enlighten himself. Very rarely such a faculty is bestowed upon a person by the God Almighty. A man, therefore, needs the help of a guide or a perfect man to show him the path which leads to Him. Guru Nanak says that the Guru should be such who instead of holding out promises for pleasure and paradise should awaken the soul of a person, should rouse him to a consciousness of his higher needs and teach him love, service and devotion. The Guru puts a man straight on the path of his cherished goal, enables him to have His glimpses and bids him to go ahead and help himself. Guru Nanak says that the Guru should teach a person the lesson of love to all mankind.

सतिगुर ऐसा जाणीऐ, जो सभसे दए मिलाए जीओ । (श्री राग म. १)

"The true Guru is such who uniteth all."

(Guru Nanak in *Sri Rag*)

Guru Nanak, therefore, started the institution of congregational worship (*Sangat*) which brought amongst his disciples the spirit of sitting together. In such a gathering people from all strata of society sat together as equals. They also discussed, amongst themselves the spiritual and social problems and thus better understanding prevailed amongst them. Guru Nanak rejected the sense of individualism and instead inculcated amongst his followers the sense of sitting together and understanding each other.

So the first principle of the religion of Guru Nanak (*Nam Japo*) defines man's duty towards God in the following way. Through the grace of Guru a man should mould his thoughts and actions in conformity with His Will, meditate on Him with devotion and love Him and His creation. In so doing the man also has to earn his livelihood and discharge his social obligations. This brings us to the question of a man's duty to himself and towards society.

2. Kirt Karo

In this principle, Guru Nanak defines person's duty towards himself, *i. e.* to his body, soul and mind. Guru Nanak considers that the soul is a spark from the Divine Light and the body is its vehicle with which it fights the evil on the battle-ground of this world for its progress to its goal, *i. e.* merging in the Main Light.

The arms with which the soul has to fight is the divine knowledge which could be gained by concentrating the mind in the worship of God.

The soul, therefore, has to be provided with spiritual food. Similarly the body which is the servant or vehicle for the soul has to be provided with necessities to keep it fit. Of course it should not be pampered. Guru Nanak did not agree with those who considered the body as useless and therefore, fit only to be tortured to liberate the soul. He also did not agree with those who advocated that the world should be shunned. He considered that the world with all its evil charms should not be shunned but should be lived in. A man while living in this world should discharge his obligations by meditating on Him and by earning his livelihood by doing honest work. In this world of sins a man should live the life of honesty and piety just as the lotus flower, which remains all the time in water yet does not get wet. Honest labour keeps a man's mind away from evil. He in very strong terms, disapproved dishonesty.

हक पराइया नानका, उस सूअर उस गाइ ।

(वार मान म. १)

"Taking away what belongs to others is like eating swine's meat by Muslims and beef by Hindus".

(Guru Nanak in *Var Manjh*)

The principle of honest labour was so much in the heart of Guru Nanak that while at Eminabad, he preferred to stay at the house of a poor but honest worker Bhai Lallo and rejected the offer of hospitality by the village chief Malik Bhago telling the latter that his earnings contained the blood of the innocent persons. In the same way he decried those who leave this world and live in jungles. He called them as cowards who run away from the rigours of life and yet live on the charity of the house-holder.

3. Wand Chhako

This principle defines the duty of a person to a society. Guru Nanak, perhaps, was the first person who laid the foundations of socialism. He not only preached but demonstrated to the people, during his last days, as to how people could work together, live as brothers and equals and share their earnings. While at Kartarpur, the village he founded, and where he lived for many

years after he handed over the Guruship to Baba Lehna Ji (Guru Angad Ji), he taught the people about the dignity of labour and started the institution of community kitchen towards which everyone contributed one tenth of his earnings. It is a remarkable event that the Sikh community has maintained this institution and with the grace of God Almighty will be able to maintain it for ever. There is no better example of socialism than is found in this institution where high and low sit together and partake the food. Such an institution inculcates love and brotherhood. People from highest and lowest strata of society are seen sitting in a row and eating together. A person who loves mankind loves Him also.

Another salient feature of this institution is service. It is a known fact that the food served in community Kitchen or *langar* is not prepared by hired labour. Ladies and gents who, in their homes, have got servants and hardly find a chance to do any work, find it a matter of privilege and pleasure to cook and serve the food to people irrespective of caste, creed or status. They consider even to clean the Kitchen utensils, as a matter of great honour.

To sum up, Nanak preached the religion of love, service and devotion to duty and God. He never decried any religion. He considered that every religion was based on good principles but the priestly class corrupted them for their own interests. He, therefore, decried superstition, ritualism and formalism introduced by the priestly class. He advised the people against these evils. Instead of dragging the people to the rigmarole of philosophy which he termed as mental gymnastics and which general masses could not understand, he used his practical commonsense (as Dr. Gokal Chand Narang puts it) to bring home to the common man the uselessness of ritualism. During his discourses with scholars of different religions, he, as Malcom says, "won with force of reason and humanity." As we will see later in this book, his way of dealing with his opponents was practical and humorous.

To a casual observer of Sikhism, Guru Nanak because of his sympathetic way of dealing with other religions, will appear to be a mere reformer who improved upon the social system but did not find anything wrong with the religious doctrines then prevailing and worked as a mediator between the contending religions.

But the fact is that a minute study of his teachings shall amply convince a reader that he was much above an ordinary reformer and, in fact, was a revolutionary who not only gave to the masses a new concept of God, a new concept of religion—practical and not mere philosophical—but also improved upon the social system, by inducting the elements of socialism in day to day working. His main teachings can broadly be summed up as under :

Devotion to God

Guru Nanak's conception of God, as we have already explained, was quite different from those prevailing at that time. Guru Nanak's God was both *Nirgun* and *Sargun*. He rejected the theory of incarnation of God and of intercession with Him by anyone how-so-ever high he may be. He said that God should be approached directly by worshipping Him only and none else. He also declared that no body had the authority to promise pleasure, paradise and intercession in the next world. The relation between God and man, the Guru said, should be that of men and women. A person should love God as a fond wife loves her husband. A person should have in his heart the same pangs of love as are there in the heart of a faithful wife who is separated from her spouse. The object of worship should not be reward of pleasures or paradise but Union with Him.

Moral Code

Guru Nanak improved upon the Code of morals by bringing forth the positive side of virtue. To the people known moral codes were such as (a) thou shalt not lie, (b) thou shalt not kill, (c) thou shalt not tease anyone, (d) though shalt not steal, etc. Such a conception of Dharma gave to the people an impulse to become ascetics. Influenced by the nothingness of life, they ran away from manly duties. Most of these good men considered the body as hotbed of evils and thought it fit to be tortured only. Guru Nanak advised the people to take up the life of love, honesty and active service, and consider this body as temple of God. It should be kept fit to serve the creation of God. In the service of His creation man should consider himself too small and see Him manifest in the creation. Guru Nanak has laid great stress on humility and service.

Nationalism—Patriotism

Guru Nanak was the first Indian who gave the concept of nationalism to the Indian people. The name HINDUSTAN was

given to this country by Guru Nanak. In Guru Granth Sahib we find this word used for the first time in the history, by Guru Nanak who was an eye witness to the invasion by Babar. In his early age when Guru Nanak visited Bhai Lallo, he had prophesied the invasion by Babar. In Rag Tilang he has recorded :

काइआ कप्पड़, टुक टुक होसी, हिंदुस्तान सम्हालसी चोला ।

"The bodies of people will be cut like the shreds of cloth. India will know the truth of what I say."

Again :

खुरासान खसमाना कीआ, हिंदुस्तान डराइआ ।

आपै दोसु न देई करत्ता, जसु करि मुगलु चढ़ाइआ ।

(आसा म. १)

"O Lord, thou hast owned Khurasan and hast terrified Hindustan. Thou never taketh any blame on Thy self and sendest the great death in the guise of Moghuls."

(Guru Nanak in *Rag Asa*)

It may be mentioned that though the invasion took place in Punjab (precisely Eminabad near Gujranwala in Pakistan), Guru Nanak did not consider it the invasion of Punjab but considered that Hindustan was invaded. Thus he showed us the way to lift ourselves above the narrow straits of regionalism in favour of broader aspects of nationalism.

In some of his hymns, Guru Nanak speaks in a most pathetic way about the sufferings of his countrymen. At the sight of the plight of his fellowmen, during the invasion of Babar whom the Guru very aptly called Jabar (cruel), the tender heart of this man of God bled and he composed hymns giving us glimpses of what actually happened. We may here quote a few lines :

जिन्ह सिरि सोहनि पटीआं, मांगी पाइ संधूर ।

से सिर कासी मुन्नीअन, गल बिचि आवै धूड़ि ।

महलँ अंदर होंदीआं, हुणि बहणि न मिलनि हदूरि ।

(आसा म. १)

"The ladies who dressed their hair in beautiful way and had applied vermilion in the partings, have now found their hair sheared with scissors and the dust suffocates their throats. Those who always enjoyed the comforts of palaces now don't have place even to sit."

(Guru Nanak in *Rag Asa*)

Guru Nanak seems to have been terribly moved by the sight of the devastation which his country was undergoing. He sends a protest to the Supreme Being as if a son protests to his father on the latter's visible indifference. Considering his countrymen as a helpless lot like a herd of sheep and depicting the soldiers of Babar as ferocious lions he says :

जे सकता सकते कउ मारे, ता मन रोसु न होई ।

सकता सीहु मारे पै बगै, खसमै सा पुरसाई ।

(असा म. १)

"If a powerful party attacks another party which is equally powerful then I have nothing to protest against. But if a ferocious lion jumps upon defenceless herd then O' Lord, You as the Master of herd must answer."

(Guru Nanak in *Asa Di Var*)

And history records it that when Babar realised that Guru Nanak was a man of God, the tyrant invader after having talked to Guru Nanak, felt remorse over the cruelty he had shown to the vanquished people. Babar told the Guru to ask for a gift. The Guru replied :

कह नानक सुन बाबर मीर ।

तुझते मांगे सो अहमक फकीर ।

"Hear O Babar, Nanak says, that only a foolish man of God will ask for a gift from you."

When, however, further urged, the Guru asked him to release all the prisoners, which Babar did.

Brotherhood of Man

Religious intolerance or sense of social inequality emerges from lack of correct understanding of religion. Religion teaches love and is opposed to hatred. Guru Nanak, therefore, advised everybody to follow the teachings of religion—to whatever religion one belonged—in true spirit. Since every religion accepts God as the Father Creator, every human being is equal in His eyes. Guru Nanak therefore strongly advocated against religious intolerance and caste system. He says Muslims believe that God is Rahim (Merciful). If God is merciful then why His creation (man) should have hatred towards his fellow beings. Hindus, he says, believe in Ram who is kind and just. Why then a Hindu should be otherwise? He strongly deprecated the doctrine of

caste. How a person, he said, could become high or low just by birth. It is his action, his attitude towards society which should be a guiding factor for his lowness or highness :

जाति जनमु नह पूछीऐ, सच घर लेहु बताइ ।

सा जाति सा पति है, जेहे करम कमाइ ।

(प्रभाती म. १)

"In front of the Lord caste or birth does not count. The deeds of a person make him high or low."

(Guru Nanak in *Prabhati*)

Again :

अगै जाति न जोरु है, अगै जीउ नवे ।

(आसा म. १)

"In the presence of the Lord caste or power does not count. The soul will go there as it is."

(Guru Nanak in *Rag Asa*)

To the so-called high caste people he said, that good deeds can only make them high.

सो ब्राह्मण जो विदे ब्रह्म ।

जपु तपु संजमु कमावै करम ।

सील संतोख का रखै धरम ।

(श्लोक म. १)

"Brahmin is one that realises God and practices contemplation, discipline, self control and goodness, and considers contentment and character as Dharma."

(Shalok Guru Nanak)

It is not that Guru Nanak only preached these principles, he practised them also. Almost through out all his travels in India and different countries, he had as his companions, Bala a Hindu Jat and Mardana, a low caste Muslim. While at Eminabad he declined the offer of the hospitality of the village chief Malik Bhago but lived with a so-called low caste carpenter Lallo whom he addressed as Bhai (brother).

Uplift of Women

The philosophers of the East as well as of the West called the women as "Agreeable Blunder" or as "Erroneous Development." Even some of the saints of the East have called the women as inferior to man and therefore, denied her any personal religion, access to holy scriptures or to religious gatherings. Guru Nanak

witnessed the miserable lot of the women and made a revolutionary change in social and religious law. He gave the women a status equal to that of man. He called the women as soul of the man. The sixth Guru, Guru Hargobind called her the conscience of the man. Guru Nanak, for the first time, allowed the women to take part in every religious and social functions. Sikh women now preside over religious functions and often lead the chorus during singing hymns. The following hymn of Guru Nanak shows as to how high of women he considered :

भंडि जमीऐ, भंडि निम्मीऐ, भंडि मंगणु वीआहु ।
 भंडहु होवै दोसती, भंडहु चलै राहु ।
 भंडु मुआ भंडु भालीऐ, भंडि होवै बंधानु ।
 सो किउं मंदा आखीऐ, जितु जम्महि राजान ।

(बार आसा म. १)

“Man is born of woman. Man is conceived in the womb of woman. Man is engaged and married to woman. Woman is man's best friend and family. Woman is so essential because she acts as man's bond in this world. Why call her, who gives birth to noble men, as inferior.”

(Guru Nanak in *Asa Di Var*)

Yogas

The practice of yogas, the Guru said, could discipline the body and may even clear the mind of desires, but it inducts in the mind of a person the feeling of nothingness of life. It makes the people shun the world and, therefore, become a burden on the honest house-holders. This does not cater for higher spiritual needs and keeps a person away from the love towards the creation of God and, therefore, from God Himself. Guru Nanak did not agree with those who said that men of God had nothing to do with worldly affairs and also did not subscribe to the belief that the only way to seek unity with Him was to torture the body. He advised them to adopt the yoga of pious life. The kind of yoga Guru Nanak suggested was to sing the praises of the Lord with devotional music. For this purpose Guru Nanak had started the institution of congregational worship. In one of his hymns, the Guru tells us as to what the true yoga is :

जोगु न खिया, जोगु न डंडै, जोग न भसम चढ़ाईऐ ।
 जोगु न मुंदी मूंडि मुंडाईऐ, जोग न सिंजी वाईऐ ।

अंजन माहि निरंजन रहीऐ, जोग जुगति इव पाईऐ ।
 गल्ली जोगु न होई ।
 एक दृष्टि करि समसरि जाणै, जोगी कहीऐ सोई ।
 जोगु न बाहरि मढी मसाणी, जोगु न ताडी लाईऐ ।
 जोगु न देसि दिसतरि भविऐ, जोगु न तीरथि न्हाईऐ ।
 अंजनि माहि निरंजनि रहीऐ, जोग जुगति इव पाईऐ ।
 सतिगुरु भेटै ता सहसा तूटै, धावतु बरजि रहाईऐ ।
 निश्चरु झरै सहज धुनि लागै, घर ही परचा पाईऐ ।
 अंजन माहि निरंजनि रहीऐ, जोग जुगति इव पाईऐ ।
 नानक जीवतिआ मरि रहीऐ, ऐसा जोगु कमाईऐ ।
 बाजे बाझहु सिंजी बाजै, तज निरभज पदु पाईऐ ।
 अंजनि माहि निरंजनि रहीऐ, जोग जुगति इव पाईऐ ।

(सूही म. १)

"Yoga is neither in patched coat, nor in staff, nor in smearing body with ashes, nor in putting on ear rings, nor in shaving of head and nor in blowing of horns. The true yoga is to remain detached in the world of attachments. Yoga is not in mere talks but is in looking at everyone as equal. Yoga is neither in remaining outside in cremation grounds, nor in pseudo-stance and nor in roaming about to places of pilgrimages and holy bathing. The real yoga is to remain detached in the world of attachments. Thus by the grace of true Guru, one's doubts are dispelled and mind is restrained. One receives, in abundance, the nectar of spiritual bliss, the state of perfect equipoise and satisfaction to soul. The real yoga is to remain detached in the world of attachments. Nanak says a true yogi is that who even while living, considers himself dead and has attained the state of fearlessness. The real yoga is to remain detached in the world of attachments."

(Guru Nanak in *Rag Suhi*)

A perusal of the foregoing makes it explicit that Guru Nanak preached monotheism, the Unity of God. He did not agree with the theory of incarnation of God. He considered everyone other than God as mortal and subject to birth, death and ordinary laws of nature. He preached Fatherhood of God and Brotherhood of man. In God's eyes, he said, all human beings are equals. He rejected the theory of caste distinction. He advised

the people to work honestly to earn their livings and not to run away from the world, but to live in it like a pious man. He said that doing honest labour and having true love for fellow beings is as necessary as worship of the Supreme Being. He advocated equality between man and woman. Guru Nanak did not decry any religion but asked the people to live according to the basic principles of their religions. What he decried was ritualism and formalism. While discussing spiritual or social laws with the scholars of different religions, he always used his practical common sense with a pinch of humour. As we will see in the preceding pages, there was hardly any aspect of human life which, as a real revolutionary, he left untouched. As an ideal house-holder and teacher he lived as he preached and he preached as he lived. His last years at Kartarpur, the village which he founded, bear testimony to the fact that his preachings were absolutely practicable and that his living could be imitated by any mortal if he or she made sincere efforts to imitate.

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About This Book

Guru Nanak's life-narration is shrouded in mystery and mysticism. Almost all the available biographies depict Guru Nanak as a supernatural character that has performed innumerable miracles during his earthly sojourn, the apprehension of whose truths is beyond the understanding of the ordinary man.

But here is a book on the life and teachings of Guru Nanak that is altogether different. It has put us on a new trail. All mystery and mysticism has been shed apart and the life incidents are described in such a simple, yet vivid, language that a lasting impression is left on the reader. As one goes through the book, he feels himself elated to a new and higher plane of life. In support of the narration, the original compositions of Guru Nanak have been quoted throughout.

The book is a masterly presentation of a difficult subject in an intelligible form, and Mr. M. S. Surma, its devoted author, deserves congratulations.

Lucknow,

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